EVADING SEPTEMBER 11 By Leon Wieseltier

THE NEW REPUBLIC

INVENTING BLOWBACK
By Peter Beinart

PREVENTING BACKLASH
By Sam Tanenhaus

OCTOBER 8, 2001

CAN THE DEMOCRATS SPEAK?

THE LIMITS AND NECESSITY OF POLITICS DURING WAR

Jonathan Chait
Michael Crowley
Noam Scheiber
The Editors

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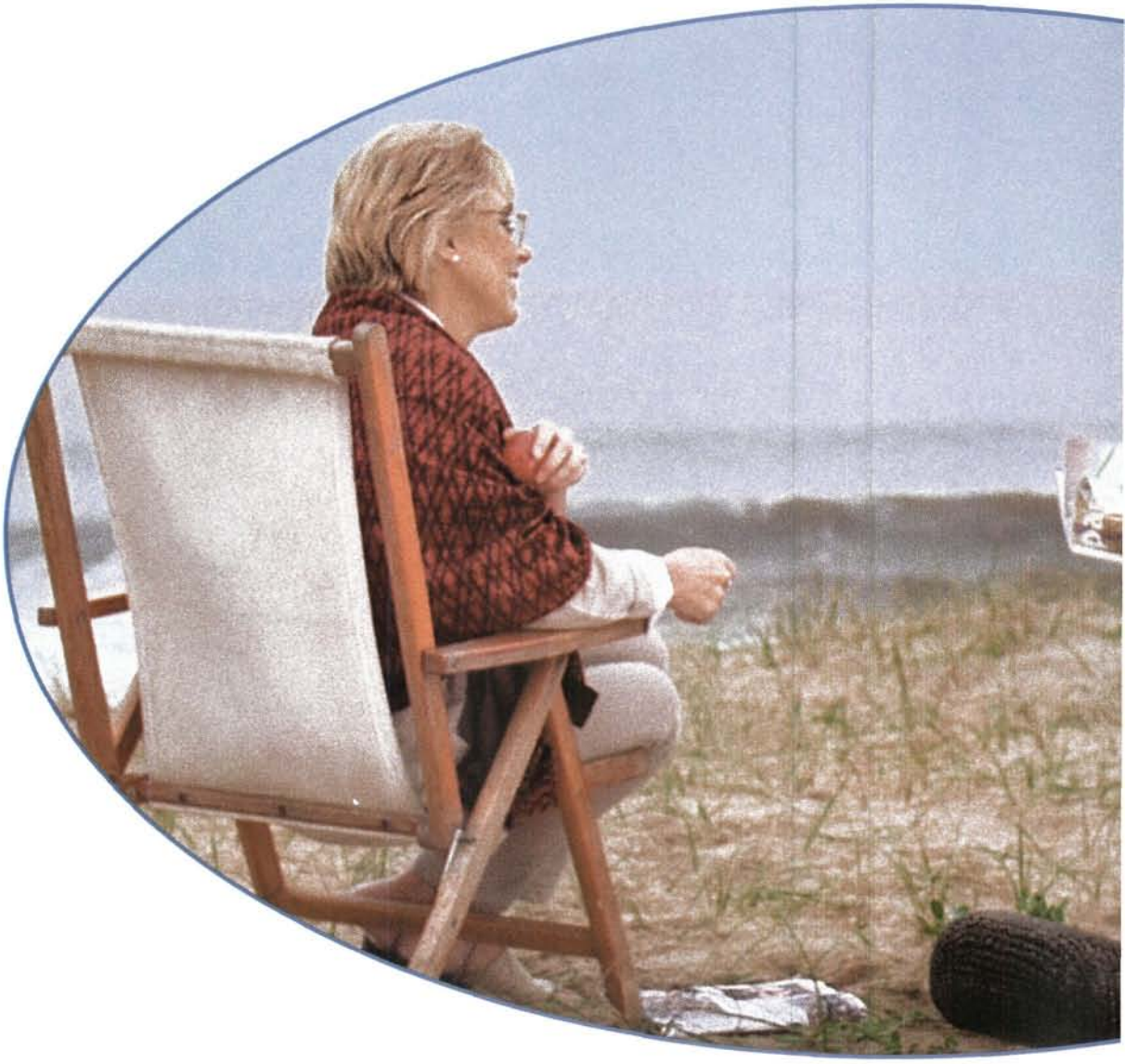

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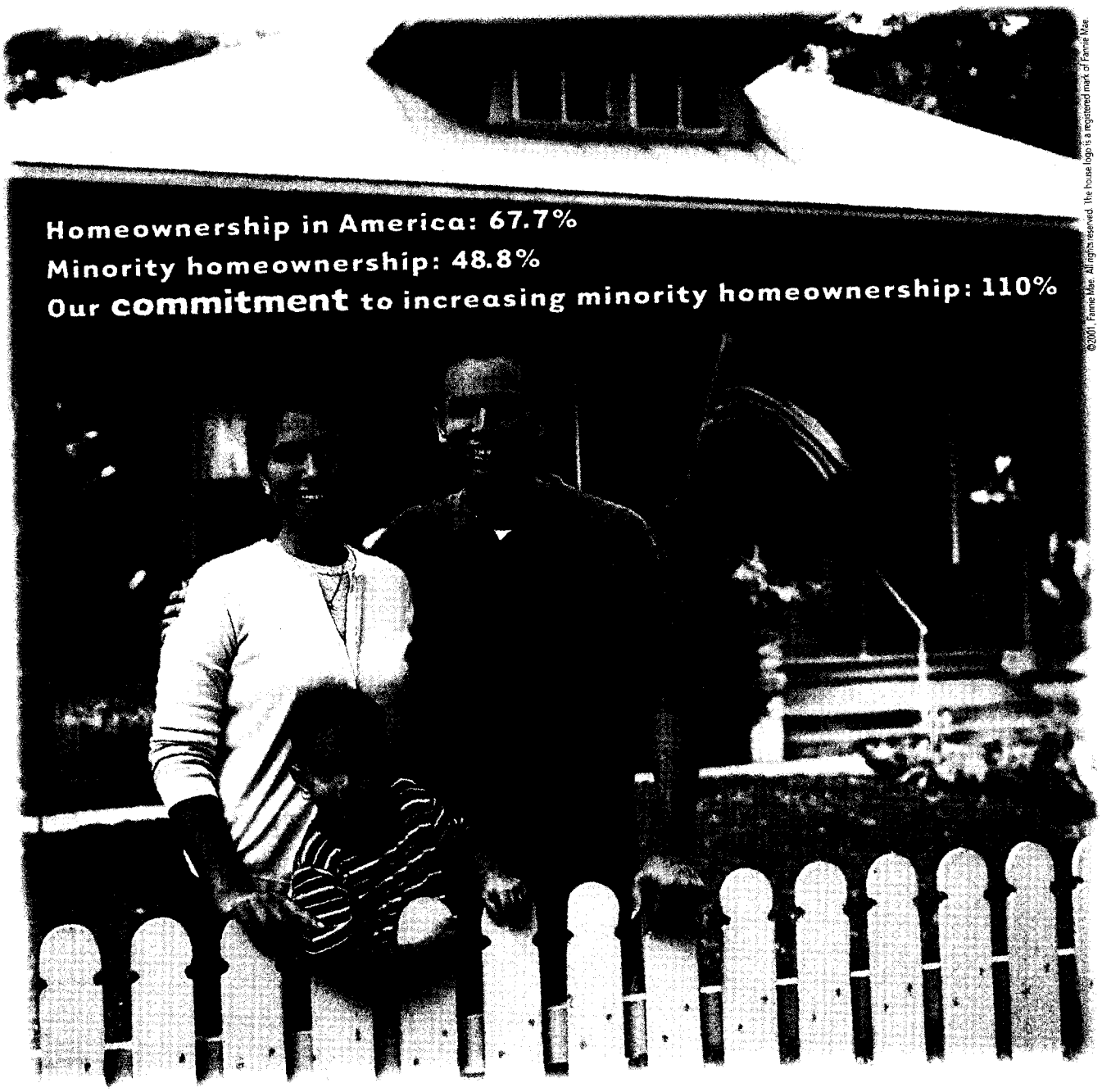

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A Journal of Politics and the Arts

WASHINGTON, D.C.
OCTOBER 8, 2001
ISSUE 4,525

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On the Web : www.thenewrepublic.com

THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 225, Number 15, Issue 4,525, October 8, 2001. (Printed in the United States on September 26, 2001.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated January 1 & 8, April 9 & 16, July 9 & 16, August 27 & September 3, 2001 and December 31, 2001 & January 7, 2002) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. For advertising inquiries, please contact Ann Rossaki at (202) 331-7494 or our NY sales office at (212) 465-8447. Yearly subscriptions, $59.94; foreign, $99.94 (U.S. funds); Canada, $79.94 (U.S. funds). Back issues, $4.00 (includes postage & handling). **© 2001 by The New Republic, Inc.** **(ISSN 0028-6583). Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Rights and permissions: fax (202) 331-0275. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Microform, Canadian Periodical Index, CD-ROM, issue, and article copies are available through University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone 1-800-521-0600. Postmaster: Send changes of address to The New Republic, P.O. Box 37298, Boone, IA 50037-0298. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope (e-mail address: tnr@aol.com). For subscription inquiries or problems call 1-800-827-1289 or visit our website at www.thenewrepublic.com.**

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CORRESPONDENCE

Infinite justice

TO THE EDITORS:

THE NEW REPUBLIC misreports my role in the Pan Am bombing case (Notebook, August 20). I agreed to analyze the court's decision, especially the eyewitness testimony cited by TNR for the British law firm of Needleman, Treon. I am not representing Libya or Muammar Qaddafi, and if the evidence after a full review shows that Abdelbaset Ali Mohmed al-Megrahi was guilty, then he should be punished *along with* anyone who put him up to it, including Qaddafi. The problem is that several sources within intelligence agencies friendly to the United States believe it is likely that this horrible terrorist act may have been committed by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine General Command and that the man [a member of that group] who bought the clothing was Abu Talb, who has engaged in previous acts of terrorism; in whose home material capable of blowing up an airplane was found; and who was also identified by the man who sold the clothing. It is these questions that have led several families of British victims of the mass murder to welcome the appeal and to demand a public inquiry. As the Reverend John Mosey, whose 19-year-old daughter was murdered, said, "I and many other relatives of the victims went on the record after the trial expressing serious concerns about the outcome. So I wouldn't be surprised if al-Megrahi was found innocent. My concern is to see justice done. I don't want to see the wrong man in prison. The worst thing for the relatives would be to see an innocent man convicted." I support these families in their effort to get at the truth, wherever it may point. I fail to understand how I can fairly be accused of a lack of sympathy for the victims if it were to turn out that this was a Palestinian rather than a Libyan terrorist bombing and if my work were to contribute to the world learning the truth.

ALAN M. DERSHOWITZ
Felix Frankfurter Professor of Law
Harvard Law School
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Contingency plan

TO THE EDITORS:

Jason Zengerle makes an interesting assertion in his report on the anti-tax protests in Tennessee: "[Don] Sundquist is right that Tennessee needs an income tax, but he hasn't made a persuasive public case for it" ("Radio City," August 20). Now that may be true, but it's very much a contingent truth. Tennessee does not,

Drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge THE EDITORS
Picasso's Sublime Smut by Jed Perl
Rorty's Many Mistakes by Simon Blackburn
THE NEW REPUBLIC
Creating Laura Bush

in fact, need an income tax to sustain its present level of state spending; the very fact that a balanced budget could be put together without such a tax proves it. The additional revenue is only needed if Tennessee is to finance a vast expansion of the scope of its government.

BRETT BELLMORE
Via the Internet

Thin ice

TO THE EDITORS:

Your reasoning in support of drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge makes no sense, particularly when coupled with your laudable support for higher fuel-efficiency standards ("Over a Barrel," August 20). I'm in favor of dramatically raising fuel-efficiency standards, particularly for SUVs. But an even simpler way to eliminate the gas-guzzlers would be to stop subsidizing gasoline for American motorists. If we paid something approximating a world market price for motor fuel, SUVs would get lighter and less overpowered in a hurry. Opening even a small part of ANWR to exploration creates needless environmental risk. Worse, it would help maintain our artificially low petroleum prices and help perpetuate the very waste you decry.

DAVID DUBUISSON
Summerfield, North Carolina

TO THE EDITORS:

Yes, caribou populations are up; yes, horizontal drilling reduces the number of holes punched in the tundra; and yes, roads can be built on ice. But no, no, and again no on your baseless assertions that what has happened on the North Slope (or anywhere else for that matter) means that drilling in ANWR is justified. There are well-documented, egregious environmental degradations in the Lower 48's refuges and forests—most notably by drilling's ugly cousin, mining. But that is, conceptually, beside the point. ANWR oil and gas will not be available for over a decade; it will provide but a scant million barrels per day—very little in terms of our daily consumption. ANWR is a wildlife refuge, a project that has intrinsic meaning worth pondering for a moment. It is not a test ground for new and exciting ways to drill oil.

WILLIAM S. DILLINGHAM
Senior Economist
Washington State Employment Security Department
Olympia, Washington

Miss Estonia

TO THE EDITORS:

Benjamin Smith's Tallinn Dispatch points out noticeably growing trends of ambivalence about government among the citizens of Eastern Europe ("Western Union," August 20). Unfortunately, there is little chance—especially in states like Hungary and Estonia, which are likely to be the first brides welcomed to the EU dance—that those governments would consider the radical notion of turning down their Western suitor. A generic monetary policy and overeager regulations are all good reasons for Eastern Europe to say no to Brussels; however, there is too much recognition, power, and money on the line for the politicians in this beauty contest, citizens be damned.

BENJAMIN DUCHEK
Via the Internet

Law review

TO THE EDITORS:

I served on a nine-week cocaine trafficking trial earlier this year. Like Cass R. Sunstein, I was amazed at how reality can differ from expectation ("The Juror," August 20). We had a jury of nine men and three women; five blacks, six whites, and me (Asian American). We had less difficulty than I expected in six days of deliberations, convicting two young, black defendants on most of the charges (the kingpin faced 98; the conspirator about ten). All the minority jurors were intent on conviction, while the jurors who were protective of the defendants' rights were three white males. As someone whose biggest exposure to jury behavior had come from the sham of the O.J. Simpson trial, I found our deliberations startling, rejuvenating, and affirming.

DAVID DE LA FUENTE
San Francisco, California

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FOX NEWS CHANNEL: The Most Biased Name in News?

Fox News Channel wraps itself in slogans like "Fair and balanced" and "We report, you decide," but just how impartial is it? FAIR decided to check out Fox's claims, and we found an overwhelming right-wing tilt in the network's news sources and stories.

In a study of interviewees on the network's signature political news show, "Special Report with Brit Hume," FAIR found that of 56 partisan guests in a five month period, 50 were Republicans and six were Democrats. That's 89 percent Republican—a greater than 8 to 1 imbalance.

But "Special Report"—created in 1998 as a daily update on the Clinton sex scandals—doesn't just skew Republican, it skews conservative: During the course of the study, 71 percent of the show's guests were avowed conservatives. Conservatives outnumbered all other points of view, including non-political guests, by a factor of more than 2 to 1.

What's more, out of 92 guests, the show featured only eight females and six people of color, making for a lineup that was 91 percent male and 93 percent white.

The darling of conservative politicos, Fox News Channel's editorial line is that the network is an antidote to supposedly "liberal" mainstream media like CNN. But the facts just don't back Fox up. As a comparison to "Special Report," FAIR studied interviewees on CNN's "Wolf Blitzer Reports" over the same period, and found that 57 percent of partisan guests were Republicans—a less dramatic rightward tilt than on Fox, but still significant.

FAIR's report—published in a special issue of our magazine, *Extra!*—made waves in the mainstream press: Outlets across the country carried stories about it, including the Associated Press, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times* and *USA Today*.

How has Fox responded? So far, they've attacked us personally, but were unable to specify any problems with our numbers or methodology. Bill O'Reilly had us on his show to berate us for calling him conservative, and Brit Hume told reporters Fox would look into the report, saying that if the network found "some imbalance, then we'll correct it." We're still waiting.

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Back to Front

WHEN AMERICA GOES to war, Americans ask a historical question: How did we get ourselves into this? Doves usually answer: imperialism. If we didn't do such nasty things around the world, we wouldn't be attacked. But as I tried to show last week, the connection between our misdeeds and their attacks can be rather tenuous. And so more sophisticated doves offer a more sophisticated answer: "blowback." Our foreign policy doesn't just create enemies in a general sense, it creates them in a very specific sense: We fund and train the people who later attack us. During the Panama invasion, doves gleefully noted Manuel Noriega's ties to the CIA. During the Gulf war, they gleefully noted America's semi-support for Saddam as a counterweight to Iran. And today antiwar commentators instruct us that the CIA, through its support for the Afghan war against the Soviet Union, created Osama bin Laden.

At first glance, blowback might not seem like a good historical argument for doves to make. After all, by condemning the U.S. for getting into bed with Noriega and Saddam and bin Laden in the past, doves acknowledge that they are worthy of condemnation—which might suggest that America should atone for its past wrongs by opposing them now. But doves aren't making a point about America's enemies; they are making a point about America. The assumption behind blowback is that the U.S. *can't* atone—that as long as it intervenes around the world, it will foster evil. To go to war against bin Laden today will only create more bin Ladens tomorrow.

Which makes it of more than mere historical interest that, as applied to the United States and Afghanistan, the blowback theory is dead wrong. American intervention in the Afghan war didn't create Osama bin Laden. In fact, if the United States bears any blame for bin Laden's terrorist network today, it's because in the 1980s and '90s, we didn't intervene in Afghanistan aggressively *enough*.

As bizarre as it may sound to the antiwar left, the CIA was deeply wary of U.S. involvement in Afghanistan. The Agency didn't think the mujahedin rebels could beat Moscow, and it feared that if it ran the war, it would take the blame if things went awry. As Vincent Cannistraro, who led the Reagan administration's Afghan Working Group from 1985 to 1987, puts it, "The CIA was very reluctant to be involved at all. They thought it would end up with them being blamed, like in Guatemala." So the Agency tried to avoid direct involvement in the war, and to maintain plausible deniability. For the first six years following the 1979 Soviet invasion, the U.S. provided the mujahedin only Eastern-bloc weaponry, so the rebels could claim they had captured it from Soviet troops rather than received it from Washington. And while America funded the mujahedin, it played barely any role in their training. To insulate itself, the U.S. gave virtual carte blanche to its allies, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, to direct the rebel effort as they saw fit.

This is where bin Laden comes in. After Moscow invaded, he and other Arab militants went to defend Afghanistan in the name of Islam. The Pakistani government allowed them in, and the Saudis gave them money, hoping to foster a Sunni Islamist network to counter the Shia network of rival Iran. Riyadh thought the network would espouse the monarchy's brand of conservative, rather than revolutionary, fundamentalism. And that idea seemed less naïve in the 1980s when bin Laden was still a loyal Saudi subject, and before Islamist rebellions had broken out in Algeria and dramatically intensified in Egypt.

Had the U.S. been present on the ground in Afghanistan, it would have known about this. And it probably would have tried to stop it—if only because the Arab volunteers were aiding a virulently anti-Western Afghan rebel leader named Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, who opposed not only the Soviets, but the Western-backed mujahedin as well. But the U.S. wasn't present on the ground, and it had only the vaguest knowledge of the Arabs' presence and aims. In retrospect, that might seem hard to believe. But remember, contrary to bin Laden's later boasts, the Arabs were few in number (most came *after* the war, once bin Laden's network was established) and played virtually no military role in the victory over the Soviets. And the skittish CIA, Cannistraro estimates, had less than ten operatives acting as America's eyes and ears in the region. Milton Bearden, the Agency's chief field operative in the war effort, has insisted that "[T]he CIA had nothing to do with" bin Laden. Cannistraro says that when he coordinated Afghan policy from Washington, he never once heard bin Laden's name.

And if U.S. disengagement contributed to the formation of bin Laden's network during the war, it contributed to it after the war was over as well. In 1992 the Communist regime in Kabul finally fell. Afghanistan needed foreign aid to reconstruct its shattered infrastructure, and an intense diplomatic effort to force its fractious mujahedin leaders to lay down their arms. The logical source of that financial assistance and political intervention was the U.S., which enjoyed the goodwill of many mujahedin leaders. But by all accounts, once Afghanistan's troubles lost their cold war significance, the Bush père and Clinton administrations paid them virtually no high-level attention. Neither administration tried seriously to negotiate a truce between the parties, and U.S. aid, which had totaled roughly $3 billion in the 1980s, dropped, by the end of 1994, nearly to zero.

For two more hideous years, mujahedin factions fought each other and preyed on an already brutalized population. Had ordinary Afghans not been desperate for the civil war to end, and for a leadership with at least some moral code, they would not have backed the Taliban, the religious students coming from the Pakistani border. And had Afghanistan not faced a political vacuum, Pakistan would not have armed those students in the hope that through them, it could dominate its neighbor to the northwest.

America's abandonment of Afghanistan was of a piece with its abandonment of countries like Liberia, Somalia, and Congo, which also disintegrated after cold war dictators fell. In Liberia the resulting anarchy produced the murderous Charles Taylor. In Somalia it produced the murderous Mohamed Farah Aideed. In Congo it produced the genocidal Hutu refugee camps. And in Afghanistan it produced the Taliban. Except that the Taliban didn't just harbor tribal killers, they harbored Al Qaeda, which brought its savagery all the way to America's shores.

So the doves are wrong: There was no blowback. America's involvement in Afghanistan in the 1980s didn't help create Osama bin Laden; Saudi Arabia's involvement in Afghanistan in the 1980s helped create Osama bin Laden, in large part because the United States was too timid to direct the war itself. Similarly, it wasn't America's intervention in Afghanistan in the 1990s that created the Taliban; it was Pakistan's intervention and America's nonintervention. Doves might consider this as they counsel the U.S. to respond to September 11 by leaving the rest of the world to its own devices. After all, it was leaving the rest of the world to its own devices that got us into this in the first place.

PETER BEINART

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Loyal Opposition

AS AMERICA PREPARES for war, an unusual peace has settled upon Washington. After President Bush addressed Congress last week, his erstwhile nemesis, Tom Daschle, embraced him on the House floor. Two days later, Richard Gephardt—last seen savaging Bush over his plan to privatize Social Security—happily obliged a White House request to echo administration sentiments in his own radio address. And Democrats have backed up these bipartisan gestures with legislative action. Not long ago, top Democrats were vowing to hold up appropriations until President Bush proved he could balance the budget; but within days of the attacks on New York and Washington, Democrats had joined Republicans in approving $40 billion of additional spending on the military and on the cleanup in New York. And when it came time to authorize military action, every Democrat supported the president save one.

This is as it should be. Before America goes to war, an adversarial public debate over the use of force is a sign of our democracy's health. After America goes to war, the lack of an adversarial public debate over the use of force is a sign of our democracy's health. There should be discussion, of course, and if necessary, criticism. Support does not require a collapse of critical thought and neither does patriotism. But the task of criticism should be approached gingerly, in a way that stresses common national goals and does not undermine the president's ability to act as commander-in-chief. And the truth of our situation—the critical truth that the left cannot seem to understand—is that this country is not preparing to start a war; the war started when our enemies attacked New York and Washington. America cannot prevent the war that Osama bin Laden has begun. All it can do is decide not to fight.

And yet there is also something disquieting about the new bipartisan harmony. Politics has stopped not only at the water's edge, but well before it. And that is dangerous, because America isn't only fighting a war; it is facing an economic crisis. Last month's attacks have plunged an already fragile economy into what will almost certainly be a full-fledged recession. And unlike in foreign policy—where the president deserves considerable deference, and where the parties generally agree—on economic policy, the president deserves less deference, and the parties do not generally agree. Which is why the Democrats in Congress don't merely have a right to vigorously resist the economic policies the White House has proposed over the past two weeks; they have an obligation.

Consider the ballyhooed $15 billion airline bailout that Congress passed last week after little serious debate. As Noam Scheiber describes in these pages (See "Flying Blind," page 19), the bailout represents an economically incoherent sop to airline industry moguls and shareholders. It props up poorly run companies that would likely have failed even if the terrorist attacks had not occurred. And it siphons off money that could be spent far more productively, and equitably, on other anti-recessionary measures. And yet the Democratic leadership watched virtually mute as it sailed through Congress.

The same need for loyal opposition goes for tax policy. As Jonathan Chait explains in these pages (see "The Home Front," page 24), some conservatives see the war as an unexpected, new rationale for cutting the capital gains tax. And so the Democrats need to forcefully, and quickly, reject any permanent new tax cuts—especially those targeted to the ultrarich. In fact, they should call for the repeal of the most regressive portions of the Bush tax cut passed in May (portions that don't take effect for many years) and propose using the money to finance emergency spending—either to combat terrorism or to combat the coming recession. They might endorse an idea floated last week by Representative Barney Frank: He would repeal the reduction in the top income tax rate, then plow that money back into the Social Security and Medicare trust funds—shoring up each program's long-term financing while creating room for extra spending now. Or, if Democrats are afraid of being labeled tax hikers, they might take the money from such a repeal and give it back as a rebate on payroll taxes, which would help those who need it most while giving a small jolt to the economy.

President Bush has said the country must get on with its business, and he is right. Part of that business is war. And part of it is politics. Sometimes patriotism demands unity; sometimes it demands sharp, if earnest, disagreement. Democrats need to realize that, at this moment in history, it demands both. ■

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N O T E B O O K

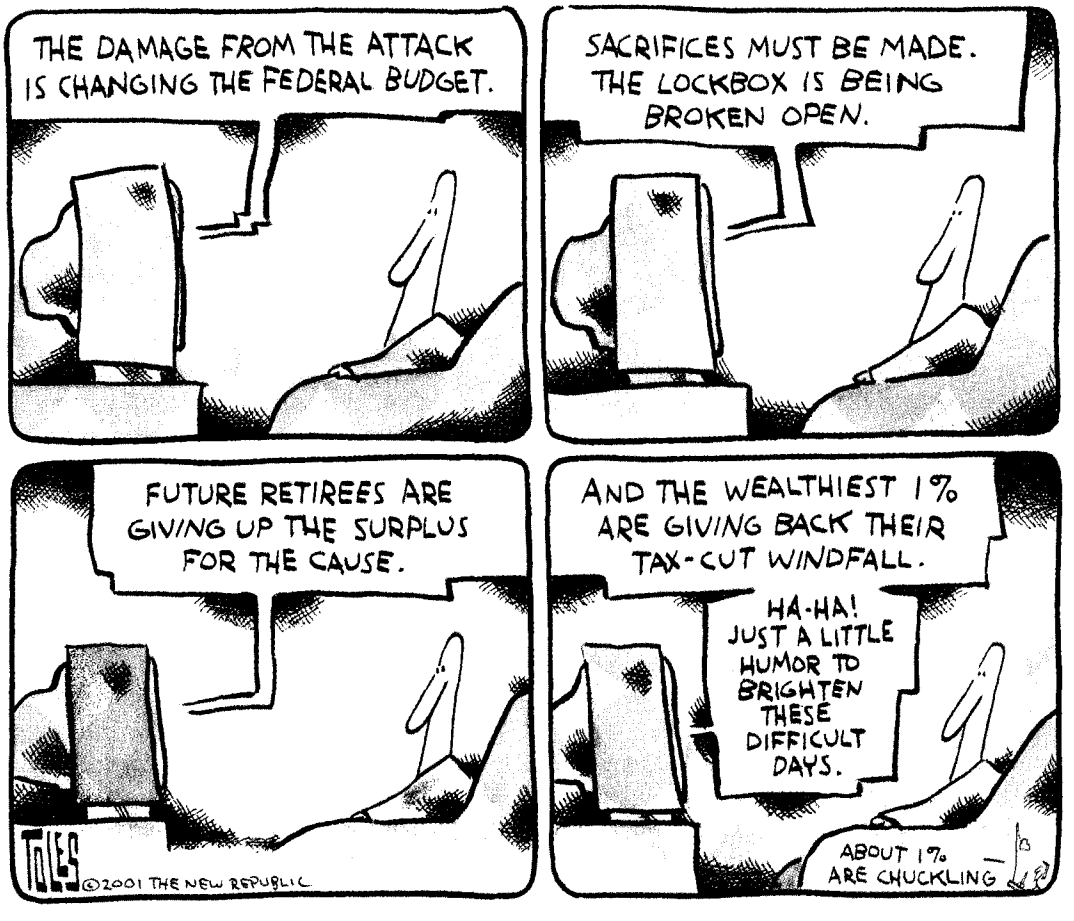
IDIOCY WATCH: The disaster of September 11 has prompted many, many dumb and outrageous observations: Such an enormity addles the mind, and many minds have been addled. But there is nothing more dumb and more outrageous, surely, than the suggestion that a terrorist attack never took place. That suggestion would denote either a complete collapse of the moral sense or a complete collapse of the sense of reality. Nowhere to be found, right? Wrong. To Reuters goes the shameful distinction of having suffered both those collapses. The news agency has decided not to refer to what happened in New York and Washington as terrorism. "We all know that one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter," explained Stephen Jukes, the head of global news at Reuters, "and that Reuters upholds the principle that we do not use the word terrorist." It is in the same Orwellian spirit as his agency's policy that Jukes invokes principle to justify an abandonment of principle—of the principle, say, that the first duty of journalism is to describe the world accurately, or of the principle that language must not be allowed to be infected by politics so that accuracy of description is no longer possible. The only other person in the world who insists that what we are witnessing is not terrorism is, of course, Osama bin Laden. Oh yes, Jukes admitted that Reuters' disgusting semantics is also inspired by cowardice: "[W]e don't want to jeopardize the safety of our staff. Our people are on the front lines, in Gaza, the West Bank, and Afghanistan. The minute we seem to be siding with one side or another, they're in danger." This is how repressive governments and societies have always beaten a free press. And what are those sides, exactly? We say they are the side of truth and the side of falsehood, and that Reuters has chosen sides quite clearly. Now for the other addled minds:

"My daughter, who goes to Stuyvesant High School only blocks from the World Trade Center, thinks we should fly an American flag out our window. Definitely not, I say: The flag stands for jingoism and vengeance and war."—Katha Pollitt, *The Nation*, October 8

"America, America. What did you do—either intentionally or unintentionally—in the world order, in Central America, in Africa where bombs are still blasting? America, what did you do in the global warming conference when you did not embrace the smaller nations? America, what did you do two weeks ago when I stood at the world conference on racism, when you wouldn't show up? Oh, America, what did you do?"—Former San Francisco Supervisor Amos Brown, speaking at a memorial service for the victims on September 17 (Thanks to *Andrewsullivan.com.*)

"We know who the homicidal maniacs are. They are the ones cheering and dancing right now. We should invade their countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity."—Ann Coulter, *National Review Online*, September 13

"Perhaps it's eerie serendipity, perhaps it's my paranoia, but an acid thought keeps plaguing me. Isn't it odd that on the day—the DAY—that the Democrats launched their most blistering attack on 'the absolute lunacy' of Bush's unproven missile-defense system, which 'threatens to pull the trigger on the arms race,' what Sen. Biden calls today in the *Guardian*, his 'theological' belief in 'rogue nations,' that the rogue nation should suddenly become such a terrifying reality. The fact that I could even think such a thought says more to me about the bankruptcy and moral exhaustion of our leaders even in the face of a disaster where any


THE DAMAGE FROM THE ATTACK IS CHANGING THE FEDERAL BUDGET.
SACRIFICES MUST BE MADE. THE LOCKBOX IS BEING BROKEN OPEN.
FUTURE RETIREES ARE GIVING UP THE SURPLUS FOR THE CAUSE.
AND THE WEALTHIEST 1% ARE GIVING BACK THEIR TAX-CUT WINDFALL.
HA-HA! JUST A LITTLE HUMOR TO BRIGHTEN THESE DIFFICULT DAYS.
TOLES
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ABOUT 1% ARE CHUCKLING

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action, in the current nightmare, will seem like heroism." —John Lahr, *Slate*, September 12

"If I see someone come in that's got a diaper on his head and a fan belt [wrapped] around [it], that guy needs to be pulled over and checked."—Representative John Cooksey (R-Louisiana), September 17

"Many families have been devastated tonight. This just is not right. They did not deserve to die. If someone did this to get back at Bush, then they did so by killing thousands of people who DID NOT VOTE for him! Boston, New York, DC, and the planes' destination of California—these were places that voted AGAINST Bush!"—Michael Moore, *Michaelmoore.com*, September 12

"The post-Cold War interlude is over, an era of follies—OJ, Monica—and fatuities, a few of which Tuesday's horror stories cruelly underlined: employees in wheelchairs, whom Bob Dole's Americans with Disabilities Act and the various lobby groups insist can do anything able-bodied people can, found themselves trapped on the 80th floor, unable to get downstairs, unable even to do as others did and hurl themselves from the windows rather than be burned alive."—Mark Steyn, the *Spectator* (U.K.), September 15

"That characters can bring about in one act what we in music cannot dream of, that people practice madly for 10 years, completely, fanatically, for a concert and then die. That is the greatest work of art for the whole cosmos. ... It's a crime because those involved didn't consent. They didn't come to the 'concert.' That's obvious. And no one announced that they risked losing their lives. What happened in spiritual terms, the leap out of security, out of what is usually taken for granted, out of life, that sometimes happens to a small extent in art, too, otherwise art is nothing."—German composer Karlheinz Stockhausen, September 16

"In the West, we most often see Islamic people as crazed and irrational. But have we considered that the Muslims might not be irrational when they consider America to be akin to Satan? Let's look at the Satanic Bible. What are the values of Satan? Lust, greed, gluttony, revenge. Hmm. Sounds like American society. Is New York the head of the 'Great Satan'? All that is evil in the world can be found in New York: MTV, the United Nations, the U.N. abortion programs, the Council on Foreign Relations, New Age Church of St. John the Divine, Wall Street greed, Madison Avenue manipulation and of course more confirmed AIDS cases than the rest of America combined. Let's remember the filthy sodomite gay parade last summer in New York. Let's remember all the New York politicians falling all over themselves to praise this sick spectacle. And let's not forget that New Yorkers elected—by a landslide—the openly Marxist, treasonous and abortion-mongering, occultic Hillary to a Senate seat. All while fully knowing what she was all about. So are we all innocent here in New York? Are we innocent with our porno, drugs, filthy Jay Leno monologues, our idolatry, materialism and consumerism?"—Anthony Lobaido, international correspondent, *Worldnetdaily.com*, September 13 (Thanks to James Taranto, *Opinion Journal*.)

OKAY, WE CAN GO OUT AND WIN THIS THING AS SOON AS WE FIND OUT WHICH ONE OF YOU STOLE THE BALL.
U.S.
RUSSIA
PAKISTAN
NORTHERN ALLIANCE
SAUDI ARABIA
OKAY, I'M WILLING TO BUY IT BACK.
TOLES
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DEPT. OF CORRECTIONS: Due to a production error, an Abraham Lincoln quote in Lawrence F. Kaplan's article "No Choice" (October 1) was distorted. It should read: "The national resources ... are unexhausted, and, as we believe, inexhaustible." ■

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On the Hill

Home Alone

By MICHAEL CROWLEY

BACK IN THE peaceful days of late summer, Democrats were finally getting around to something they'd neglected since Bill Clinton left office: foreign policy. In August, Tom Daschle and Richard Gephardt each delivered addresses criticizing the Bush administration for its aversion to multilateralism and its obsession with missile defense. A few weeks later, Senator Joe Biden did the same at the National Press Club. Previewing Biden's speech that morning, the *Los Angeles Times* explained that congressional Democrats had begun a prolonged "assault on the Bush administration's defense and foreign policies." The date was September 10.

Needless to say, it all became moot the next day. Politically, the irony of September 11 is that in the short term, it takes foreign policy off the table as an issue. Democrats cannot easily criticize the president while the country is at war, and they probably should not. When he was informed on CNN last weekend that a new poll showed Bush with a 90 percent approval rating, Biden chirped: "Count me in the 90 percent." When Bush stepped down from the podium after his address to Congress last week, Daschle and Gephardt literally hugged him.

But over the longer term, September 11 gives foreign policy a political centrality it has not had for a decade. And for Democrats, that is a serious problem. One of the reasons Daschle, Gephardt, and Biden felt compelled to deliver their weighty global-vision speeches, after all, was that the public doesn't trust the Democrats on foreign policy. Just last month, a Gallup poll showed that voters preferred Republicans by a *27-point* margin on the issue—easily the biggest gap between the parties on any topic. And it's not hard to understand why: Few prominent Democrats have a reputation for foreign policy expertise. In the 1990s congressional Democrats generally ignored the GOP's advantage on national security. They assumed it didn't matter because Democrats enjoyed an edge on issues like health care and education that the public cared about more. Now, all of a sudden, it matters a great deal.

In the 1980s Democrats thought about foreign policy a lot. And for good reason: It was killing them. The party's perceived unwillingness to stand up to the Soviet Union helped sink three successive presidential candidates that decade. And so centrists, led by the Democratic Leadership Council, devoted themselves to shedding the party's post-Vietnam, dovish image. Ambitious congressional Democrats like Al Gore, Gary Hart, Chuck Robb, Sam Nunn, Les Aspin, and Lee Hamilton immersed themselves in the minutiae of throw weights, MIRVs, and deterrence theory. After Michael Dukakis's disastrously goofy tank ride in 1988, many party leaders assumed the next Democratic presidential candidate would have to be experienced and tough-minded on national security.

But then the Soviet Union disappeared, and the Democrats' vulnerability vanished with it. Bill Clinton was more hawkish than previous Democratic nominees, choosing Gore—one of the few Senate Democrats who voted for the Gulf war—as his running mate. And as president he supported military interventions in Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo. But his passion was clearly for domestic policy, and the congressional party tended even more dramatically in that direction. Tom Daschle rose to minority (and now majority) leader with virtually no profile on foreign policy whatsoever. Gephardt almost always talked about foreign policy in terms of trade—a topic about as relevant to the current crisis as Medicare reform.

Today, the 1980s defense wonks—Nunn, Aspin, Gore, Robb—are gone from Congress, if not from politics altogether. And they have been replaced by a new generation of up-and-comers who assumed the way to get booked on "Meet the Press" was to bone up on HMO reform and oil drilling in Alaska. John Edwards, the Democrats' great Southern hope, has yet to sponsor significant defense or foreign policy legislation. Under the header "Supporting the Military," his website highlights his efforts to support men and women in uniform—by improving their *health care.* Evan Bayh, mentioned last year as a potential Gore running mate, hadn't given a floor speech this year on defense or foreign affairs prior to the attacks. As a candidate, Hillary Clinton's foreign policy amounted to pandering to Jewish voters over Israel. Like many Democrats, her discussions of the outside world revolved around domestic liberal priorities like "environmental, health and human rights issues, as well as security concerns," as *The New York Times* put it—reflecting Clinton's order of emphasis.

There's a structural reason for the congressional Democrats' low foreign policy profile: Most party leaders haven't sought assignments on key defense and foreign policy committees. Instead, they've flocked to committees with sway over Democrat-friendly issues (like Clinton on Health and Education) or, more recently, to those pitting them against the administration on high-profile issues (like Edwards on Judiciary). In the House, none of the three Democrats with the best shot at eventually succeeding Gephardt if he runs for president—California's Nancy Pelosi, Maryland's Steny Hoyer, and Texas's Martin Frost—sit on either the House Armed Services or the International Relations Committees. (Pelosi, Edwards, and Bayh all serve on their chambers' Intelligence Committees; but Intelligence is a low-key and secretive panel—not an ideal perch for building foreign policy influence.) And to the extent House Democrats have cut a recognizable profile on security issues, it has been as critics of military spending—which is precisely the reputation you don't want right now. "Not many have a strong point of view, not many voted for the Gulf war," says a leading party strategist. "It's almost cultural."

And what's true of individual members is true of the party bureaucracy as well. A 16-page "Families First" agenda that party leaders promoted last year makes no mention of

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Who Pays for the Patients' Bill of Rights?

David R. Henderson is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and and an economics professor at the Naval Postgraduate School.

A so-called patients' bill of rights would actually restrict the freedom of employers, employees, and insurance companies. How so? Because such a law would make certain kinds of insurance policies illegal, even if health insurance companies want to offer such policies and even if employers and employees want to buy them. The particular policies that would be made illegal under legislation that Congress is currently considering are policies that limit patients' power to sue insurers and employers. Many people see that this would violate the rights of insurers and employers, and many of them, unfortunately, don't care. But the legislation Congress is considering would also violate the right of every patient reading this article; none of us would be able to work for an employer who offers health insurance that limits our power to sue.

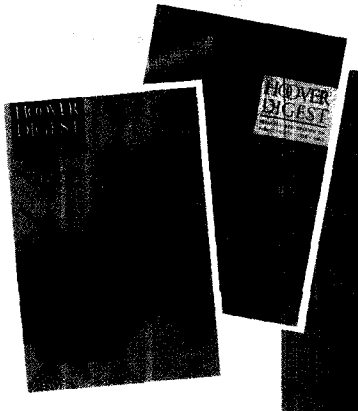
Why would patients ever want less power to sue? For the same reason that many ladder buyers want to limit the liability of ladder manufacturers. Just as lawsuits against ladder manufacturers have added a hefty markup to the price of a ladder, so also would increased liability for health insurers drive up the cost of insurance, making rates higher. Some of the more extreme proponents deny that increased liability would raise costs. But if it wouldn't raise insurers' costs, why on earth are insurers spending millions lobbying against the legislation?

You might say, "Even if employers have to pay higher premiums for insurance, so what?" Here's what. Your pay roughly equals the value of your output to your employer. If your health insurance costs an extra $300 a year because of Congress's legislation, your monetary compensation or your other fringe benefits or both will fall by about $300 a year. This basic economic reasoning is backed up by hefty economic research done by MIT economist Jonathan Gruber and others. **The people who actually pay the higher cost of employer-provided benefits are employees.**

But what if employees value the increased power to sue more than that power costs? That would mean that the wage cut they would willingly take to pay for that increased power would exceed the cost of the insurance. A profit-maximizing employer would be happy to oblige, and all—employer, employee, and insurance company—would be better off. In that case, the legislation would not be needed. The fact that we don't see insurers offering liberal powers to sue means that they, employers, and employees have all judged that employees don't value the power to sue as much as it would cost, which means that the legislation would harm employees. Interestingly, when California voters got to vote directly on regulations that limited managed-care insurers in 1996, they voted the measures down by 58 percent to 42 percent and by 62 percent to 38 percent. That same year, Oregon voters rejected a similar measure. The political pressure for a patients' bill of rights comes, not mainly from employees, but from two other groups: doctors and nurses, who want to increase the demand for their services, and trial lawyers.

— David R. Henderson

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



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foreign affairs or defense. Earlier this year Democratic National Committee Chairman Terry McAuliffe made some pro-military Democrats blanch over his solidarity with Puerto Rican opponents of Navy bombing exercises on Vieques. ("We do not want to be seen as antimilitary," protested Texas Democrat Solomon Ortiz in *The New York Times*.) And, incredibly, the DNC's website—which includes briefings on Asian-Pacific Americans, breast cancer, and the National Endowment for the Arts—has just one position paper on foreign policy or defense, and it's on "NATO Enlargement." Admits one Democratic strategist, "It's been an enormous problem for us."

Perhaps recognizing that, congressional Democrats have begun enlisting outside help. Former Clinton National Security Adviser Sandy Berger says he speaks often to party leaders like Daschle and Gephardt on an informal basis. Other Clinton national security wonks have even talked of organizing a more formal policy shop. But for the time being, the party has to rely on the few high-profile members who already know where Tajikistan is. There are basically four: Carl Levin, the bookish and cranky chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee; Biden, the garrulous chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee; Massachusetts Senator John Kerry, a Vietnam veteran who has made occasional headlines on issues like international finance scandals; and Connecticut Senator Joe Lieberman, one of just four remaining Senate Democrats who voted to use force against Iraq in 1991. The good news is that three of these men are running for president. Throw in Gore, and for the first time since the cold war, the race for the Democratic nomination might feature a serious debate over foreign policy. The bad news is that if the GOP retains a 27-point edge on the issue, that nomination may be barely worth having. ■

How an anti-terrorism report got ignored.

Sin of Commission

By FRANKLIN FOER

TWO WEEKS AFTER George W. Bush's declaration of war against terrorism, a battle plan is taking shape. We are putting the screws to Pakistan to end its history of mentoring terrorists. We will now treat Afghanistan like the rogue state that it is. The Treasury Department will try to choke off Osama bin Laden's financing. Intelligence agencies, at long last, will share information with one another. And if the Bush administration has its way, the CIA will revert to its pre-1995 guidelines, which allowed operatives to recruit informants with sketchy human rights records.

All sensible moves. And they were just as sensible when the National Commission on Terrorism proposed them more than a year ago. Yet the NCT's proposals never made it into law, and the reasons why say a lot about how difficult it will be for George W. Bush to carry out his war on terrorism today. The commission, you see, wasn't merely undermined by civil liberties groups suspicious of a serious effort against terrorism. It was undone by the very government agencies tasked with carrying out that effort.

IN WASHINGTON, blue-ribbon anti-terrorism commissions aren't exactly rare. But from the beginning, the NCT stood out. For starters, there was its mandate: It was commissioned by Congress, in the wake of the 1998 African embassy bombings, to produce the definitive blueprint for legislation overhauling counterterrorism policy. Then there was the panel's prestige. Chaired by Ronald Reagan's counterterrorism czar, L. Paul Bremer III, the commission included a retired head of the Army's Special Operations Command (Wayne Downing), a former undersecretary of defense (Fred Iklé), and a cast of foreign policy heavyweights. So unlike many other commissions whose reports get a paragraph on A-23, the NCT grabbed the attention of editorialists and Sunday talk show hosts. As former CIA director R. James Woolsey, another of the NCT panelists, puts it, "This was the best shot at change."

And the report lived up to its billing. Even its cover—which includes an image of the World Trade Center towers—was prescient. The panel found that the U.S. government wasn't prepared to prevent an Al Qaeda attack on American soil and that "the threat of attacks creating massive casualties is growing." In response, the NCT called for, among other things, expanded wiretap authority, recruitment of linguists, and the revision of laws that prevent the FBI and CIA from sharing intelligence—exactly what John Ashcroft is calling for now.

Civil liberties groups were predictably hostile. Within hours of the report's release, the ACLU called it an "ominous cloud." The Arab American Institute's James Zogby said it harked back to the "darkest days of the McCarthy era." Leftist commentators accused the commission of hyping the danger of terrorism so that the FBI and CIA could justify greater surveillance powers and more money. *Salon*'s Bruce Shapiro suggested that the NCT's warnings of domestic attack "are a con job, with roughly the veracity of the latest Robert Ludlum novel." Robert Dreyfuss wrote in *Mother Jones* that "[f]or the national security establishment, adrift with few enemies since the end of the Cold War a decade ago, the terrorist threat seems made to order."

But the national security establishment objected to the commission's recommendations as well. Testifying before Congress in 1999, FBI director Louis Freeh tried to anticipate the report's complaints, noting that "[t]he frequency of terrorist incidents in the United States has decreased in number" and implying that the bureau was already effectively combating the danger. The CIA was even more hostile. When the report appeared, CIA spokesman Bill Harlow rejected its call for the agency to jettison its "overly risk averse" approach to recruiting informants. Three members

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of the commission told me that the CIA leaked the report's more controversial recommendations in order to put the NCT on the defensive.

In part, the CIA opposed the recommendations out of fear that they would rekindle the agency's cold war reputation for dirty tricks. Under Bill Clinton, the CIA furiously tried to scrub away the tarnish of its Latin American misadventures during the 1980s, especially its alliance with Guatemalan paramilitary squads. And the NCT seemed to be pushing in the opposite direction, explicitly pleading with the CIA to find more "unsavory" terrorist sources. "Since John Deutch headed the agency," one ex-CIA official told me, "the seventh floor of Langley has become very politically correct. And they're so worried about provoking critics."

But mostly, the CIA opposed the NCT's recommendations for the same reason virtually every other government department and agency did: They trespassed on its turf. On CNN's *Late Edition*, Madeleine Albright countered the NCT's finding that the administration needed to get tougher with Pakistan and Greece. "We are pressing them [already]," she told Wolf Blitzer. And she warned that "in looking at how we fight [terrorism], we have to remember what kind of a society we are"—implying that the commission wanted to trample civil liberties. Deputy Attorney General Eric Holder told reporters that the NCT recommendations siphoned too much power away from the FBI. And the administration's civil rights chief, Bill Lan Lee, implied in a speech to the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee that Arab-Americans were being unfairly smeared. (Never mind that the report didn't once mention Arab-Americans.)

STILL, FOR ONE brief moment, Congress looked like it might impose change. Using the NCT report as their template, in July 2000 Senators Jon Kyl and Dianne Feinstein attached the recommended reforms to an intelligence authorization bill. As one Senate staffer told me, "It could have been one of the most important overhauls of American intelligence in recent memory." But the Kyl-Feinstein legislation quickly ran aground thanks largely to one man: Vermont's Patrick Leahy. Warning of CIA mischief and "risks to important civil liberties we hold dear," Leahy threatened to hold up the entire intelligence authorization bill to sink the reforms; so Kyl and Feinstein untethered the proposals from the budgetary process. Then, in October, bin Laden blew a hole in the USS *Cole* and Kyl and Feinstein's effort gained new momentum. But this time, instead of trying to defeat the legislation outright, Leahy weakened it so much that it became essentially useless. By threatening to place a hold on the bill, he extracted countless concessions. And when the legislation finally cleared the Senate in November, it did nothing to loosen CIA recruitment guidelines or expand the FBI's wiretapping authority. "It was so watered down by the time we got the bill," says one House Republican aide, "it wasn't worth taking up." And so the legislation died.

Would the Kyl-Feinstein changes have prevented September 11? Who knows? But September 11 utterly confirmed the commission's assertion that the government agencies charged with fighting terrorism were doing a woefully inadequate job. Unfortunately, those agencies proved more skilled at protecting themselves from bureaucratic encroachment than at protecting the country from Al Qaeda. And they received critical help from civil libertarians who saw counterterrorism as merely a ruse for the expansion of government power. In Washington, denial was a river in Egypt. And barely anyone except the NCT believed that terrorists might be lurking on its banks. ■

Why this war is also about oil.

Pumped Up

By GREGG EASTERBROOK

THOUGH WE STILL lack many details of the September 11 attacks, it's a good guess that oil money was involved. Osama bin Laden's inherited wealth comes from a Saudi construction family that made its fortune in the Arabian oil boom. He is also believed to receive donations from Saudis who grew rich from petroleum leases. If Saddam Hussein assisted in the attack, then oil money may have flowed to the butchers through Iraq, too. And if the terrorists got money from Saudi Arabia and Iraq, then Saudi Arabia and Iraq got money from us—because Americans bought their oil. So as the Bush administration plots the difficult and complex war against terrorism on which it has now embarked, it should add one simple and mundane element: America must reduce its consumption of Persian Gulf oil. And thereby reduce the chance that our own cash is filling terrorists' coffers.

It may be no coincidence that Islamic fundamentalist terror began in earnest in the early 1970s, about when revenues from sales of Persian Gulf oil took off. The United States and other Western nations began sending substantial sums of money to the Gulf states; at about the same time, terror attacks on Western and Israeli targets became more common. It's highly likely that some fraction of the money the West paid for oil ended up funding Arab terror. But the money continues to flow. In 2000 the United States imported 1.6 million barrels of oil per day from Saudi Arabia, which is ostensibly our friend, and 613,000 barrels of oil per day from Iraq, which is unquestionably our enemy. More than one-fifth of America's petroleum imports come from Persian Gulf states, most of which have some connection to anti-American and anti-Israeli terror. American crude oil purchases transferred around $15 billion to Saudi Arabia in 2000, a figure that's expected to be higher this year. America paid Iraq around $5 billion for oil in 2000, with that figure rising this year as well. And though the United States does not buy oil from Iran, which it labels a terrorist-supporting state, other Western nations do; as much as 50 percent of Iran's government budget is believed to derive from petroleum sales.

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Without the West's oil money, most Gulf states would have modest resources. With it they can build air-conditioned hotels and terrorist training facilities. Consider Iraq. Saddam became more dangerous to his neighbors—first Iran, then Kuwait—as his oil exports rose through the 1980s. Gulf war devastation and UN sanctions cut off Iraq's oil money in the early 1990s, and Saddam's threats to his neighbors and the world declined in concert. (His mistreatment of his own citizens continued.) In the late '90s, however, sanctions began to erode—and in 1997, America resumed buying oil from Baghdad. The United Nations gave Iraq permission to sell petroleum only if the money were used for food, medical supplies, and Gulf war reparations. But these stipulations are now widely flouted—Saddam has been selling food from the oil-for-food program to buy weapons—meaning Iraq's government is once again flush. Baghdad's projected $19 billion in petroleum export revenue this year will equal, in real-dollar terms, its annual oil take just before the invasion of Kuwait. And there is some reason to suspect (see "Blood Baath" by R. James Woolsey, September 24) that Saddam may be spending part of it to massacre American civilians.

Yet we keep shipping Iraq and other Gulf states our greenbacks. Since the first oil crunch in 1974, American pundits and politicians have spoken interminably of a search for "energy independence." All the while, our dependence has grown. In 1974 America imported 1 million barrels of oil per day from the Persian Gulf; now the figure has more than doubled to 2.5 million daily. During the Gulf war, many commentators connected our fight for Kuwait to our thirst for foreign oil. But as we go to war against terrorists from the Gulf today, almost no one has even noted the connection. Vast purchases of Middle Eastern oil are taken as a given.

In purely economic terms, of course, there is a case for such purchases. Other things being equal, if oil from Arabia costs less than domestic oil or alternative energy, then America will be more prosperous if it buys from the Gulf. Similarly, other things being equal, cheap air travel without annoying security delays is good for prosperity. In an ideal world, we'd buy Iraqi oil and walk right onto the plane. Emphatically, we now know that this is not an ideal world.

Culpability for our failure to reduce petroleum imports falls across the political spectrum. Enviros and NIMBYs are to blame for opposing domestic oil production in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, along coastal areas, and pretty much everywhere else. Right-wingers are to blame for opposing federal energy-efficiency standards and for celebrating the gas-guzzling SUV. Lefty alarmists and Hollywood airheads are to blame for terrifying the public about atomic power, which in the United States has never caused a single public death (whereas burning fossil fuel causes thousands of premature deaths annually from respiratory disease, and last month more than 6,000 Americans died in petroleum fireballs). Oilmen—including Dick Cheney before he was sworn in as vice president—are to blame for calling for an end to export sanctions against Iraq and Iran before these states stopped sponsoring terror. The American public is to blame for insisting on unlimited access to the cheapest possible energy and then, when something goes wrong (oil-backed terrorists, California electricity, and so on), demanding to know who is responsible for the outrage.

In the short term, America cannot wean itself from oil imports. But a complete cessation is not necessary. Even if the United States merely eliminated its current roughly 2 percent annual increase in petroleum use—which could be accomplished without harm to the economy by an increase in federal mpg and other energy standards—Gulf state oil income would falter. As the world's largest petroleum consumer, America controls the margins of oil demand. If the United States bought less oil from the Gulf, global demand would soften, causing per-barrel prices to decline. Saddam and the Saudi monarchy would feel it in the pocketbook, which might make them rethink their support for those who harm the United States. Right now they don't have to: The United States sends them billions no matter whom they befriend.

Today Americans burn through 875 gallons of gasoline per year per licensed driver, and of that about 100 gallons comes from the Persian Gulf. This works out to roughly $75 per year transferred from the typical American driver to Saddam and the desert princes who smile as their allies chant "death to America." As President Bush commits the United States to a war on terror, in which young American fighting men and women may make the ultimate sacrifice in the mountains of Afghanistan or on the Iraqi plains, it is scandalous that neither he, nor any other leading politician, has asked American voters to sacrifice even a little at the pump. Why won't the president, who warns of "years" of war to root out oil-financed terrorism, remind us that we are the ones buying the oil? ■

Baghdad Dispatch

Republic of Fear

By JOSHUA HAMMER

LOOMING NEAR THE murky Tigris River on the fringes of downtown Baghdad, the Al Rasheed Hotel is the showpiece of Saddam Hussein's global outreach program. A concrete tower best known for the snarling caricature of George Bush Sr. painted on the lobby floor, the Al Rasheed has played host in recent months to a procession of international trade delegations in hot pursuit of lucrative government contracts. On any given day, hundreds of businessmen from China, Russia, Turkey, Malaysia, Italy, and elsewhere—along with dozens of Iraqi security agents—mingle in the hotel lobby and in the outdoor swimming pool. Iraqi officials roar up to the entrance in new Toyota Land Cruisers to meet potential business partners, and talk of oil pipelines and multimillion-dollar construction deals fills the air.

Or, rather, it did before September 11. Within hours of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Penta-

JOSHUA HAMMER is Jerusalem bureau chief for *Newsweek* and author of *Chosen by God: A Brother's Journey.*

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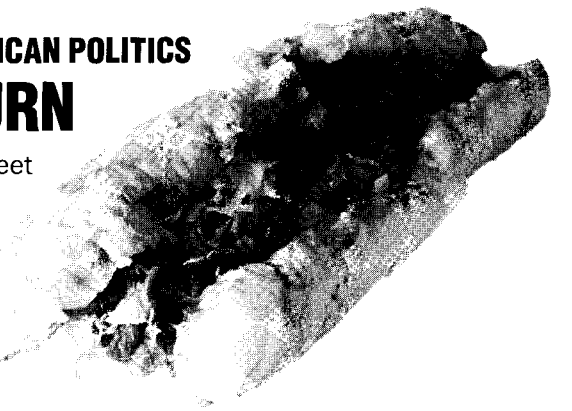
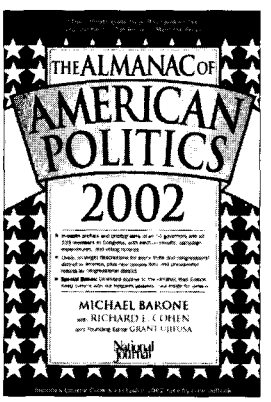


"The 1st runs north on both sides of the Broad Street corridor to include much of black North Philadelphia and south through most of heavily Italian South Philadelphia, where Italian families and their grocery stores and restaurants have been pressed tightly into narrow English and Indian-named streets under a tangle of overhead wires; this is the neighborhood where the various Rockys were filmed and the original Philadelphia cheesesteaks are sold."

—The Almanac of American Politics on Pennsylvania's 1st Congressional District



THE ALMANAC OF AMERICAN POLITICS 2002

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gon, hundreds of Al Rasheed guests rushed for the airport and the Jordanian border, leaving the hotel deserted. As the United States prepares to launch a global military campaign against terrorism, Iraqis—and those interested in doing business with them—are all but certain that their country will be caught in the crosshairs. For the time being, Washington remains focused on Afghanistan as the primary target of the anti-terrorism effort. But several intelligence services, including Israel's Mossad, have identified Saddam as a sponsor of Islamic terrorist cells, and top U.S. government officials—including Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz and, reportedly, his boss Donald Rumsfeld—are eager to include the Iraqi dictator on a list of military targets. Says Aly Eren, a Turkish industrial boiler manufacturer who does $3 million worth of business annually in Iraq: "We're in a state of high anxiety."

I SPENT NINE days in Baghdad in early September, leaving the day before the terrorist attacks. But according to the Iraqis and Western diplomats I subsequently reached by telephone, fear is now palpable. Troops have fanned out across this decrepit, mud-brown capital, beefing up their protection of Saddam's palaces, oil refineries, and other strategic sites. Extra guards have been placed outside the former U.S. Embassy, now an annex to the Embassy of Poland. And in contrast to the celebrations that broke out in the West Bank and Gaza on September 11, most Iraqis appear stunned and frightened. For the moment, at least, the fear of American retaliation has superseded the fear many feel toward Saddam Hussein. "They know what this disaster means because they've lived through many bombardments," a Western diplomat in Baghdad told me. "They're afraid for their lives, their families. They know there's nothing to cheer about."

The regime, of course, tried to blame the horror on the United States. Iraqi state-run television—using live images of the burning towers provided by Al-Jazeera, a Qatar-based Arabic-language network—broadcast commentary that linked the suffering to America's "cruel" foreign policy. Saddam made his first public statement on September 12, during an emergency meeting with Iraq's deputy prime minister and minister of military industrialization. "Regardless of the conflicting human feelings about what happened on Tuesday in the U.S., it reaps the thorns that its rulers have sown in the world," Saddam said, according to reports on Iraqi radio and television. Citing a list of American crimes, from the bombing of Japan in World War II to the war in Vietnam, Saddam also addressed the Palestinian intifada: "Now, [the U.S.] carries out criminal acts by supporting criminal and racist Zionism against the women, men, young people, elders, and children of the Palestinian people." A top Iraqi official I reached by phone could barely restrain his satisfaction. "Of course people feel good. How do you feel when your enemy faces a crisis?"

But beneath the bluster, you can feel the regime's deepening panic. Even before the attacks, Western diplomats say, Saddam lived in constant fear of U.S.-sponsored assassination. The dictator avoids public appearances, sleeps in a different palace every night, and keeps his security force in a state of high alert. Occasional bombings intensify the jitters: The week I was there a car bomb went off in a downtown market, injuring a dozen people; an English-language daily newspaper in Baghdad blamed it on "the forces of darkness in Iran." Since September 11, one diplomat told me, "Saddam has been preparing for the worst." An Istanbul businessman glimpsed those preparations when he visited the state-owned oil refinery in Basrah to discuss a contract for new equipment. "Nobody could focus on the business deal," he told me. "They were fortifying the building, trying to protect their machinery from possible bombing." The Iraqi official I spoke to in Baghdad confirmed that the government was expecting massive retaliation. "We will pay a price," he told me, "just as we have been paying a price all along."

In fact, even if no bombs ultimately land on Iraq, the terrorist assault on America may have already dealt a serious blow to Saddam. In recent years the dictator had made great strides luring foreign businesses to Iraq—both legitimate deals under the supervision of the UN-run "oil for food" program and illegal transactions paid for with the more than $1 billion the regime earns through oil smuggling and reselling food shipments abroad. Saddam International Airport, closed for a decade after the Gulf war, opened last year with great fanfare and now receives about 30 international flights a week from Jordan, Egypt, Syria, and other countries; Air France had been considering reestablishing a Paris-Baghdad flight. But businessmen I spoke to said that the outrage provoked by the World Trade Center attack is likely to return Iraq to the isolation it suffered immediately after the Gulf war. "Anybody who visits Iraq will be under close international surveillance now," a Turkish oil engineer told me. "It puts you under enormous psychological pressure. You feel like you're committing a crime just going there."

And the pressure may manifest itself in a strengthening of international sanctions, which had been weakening for years. At the UN Security Council meeting in November, members will reconsider the current policy. If Saddam refuses to allow UN weapons inspectors into the country, he could face U.S.-backed "smart sanctions," which would dent the regime's smuggling revenues by stationing international monitors at all its borders. Last July, Russia announced it would veto the American plan. But in the wake of the World Trade Center bombing, Moscow is eager to burnish its anti-terrorist bona fides—and there are growing signs that it might get on board this time. That prospect terrifies Saddam, who depends on the cash from black-market sales to pay off his army and maintain his weapons program. Experts say that Saddam is still unlikely to soften his position on UN arms inspections. "There is no sign that the Iraqis have any willingness to compromise," a Western diplomat in Baghdad told me last week. "But this time they will not be able to count on Russian resistance. This time they will not get away."

As evidence, the diplomat recounted his experience at the Al Rasheed Hotel. For the last two months, the hotel had been filled with hundreds of Russian businessmen seeking fat construction contracts as a prize for their government's opposition to smart sanctions. But after a visit to the hotel last weekend, the diplomat told me gravely, "Even the Russians are gone." ■

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Why are we bailing out the airlines?

Flying Blind

By Noam Scheiber

Earlier this year, while federal antitrust authorities were reviewing his company's proposed merger with United, US Airways CEO Rakesh Gangwal acknowledged that "there [was] no plan B" should the deal fail. The claim was surprising given that corporate executives usually pretend to be optimistic even in the worst of times. But Gangwal could no longer pretend. Though US Airways had improved since the 1980s, when it was beset by chronic delays and lost baggage, it still faced a daunting problem. With its generous pilot salaries and posh airplanes, US Airways had the cost structure of a lucrative long-distance carrier, but competed primarily on shorter, less profitable routes. Dogged by a slowing economy and increased competition from no-frills carriers, US Airways had begun to hemorrhage money—almost $200 million in the first half of this year alone.

Well, say hello to plan B: the $15 billion airline bailout that congressional negotiators and the White House agreed to last Friday. In the days following the terrorist attacks, US Airways' dismal long-term prospects had made private fundraising impossible, and the company had only enough cash in reserve to hold out for about two months amid the millions it was losing each day. But under the tentative bailout formula, US Airways will immediately receive about $400 million of the $5 billion the government is throwing at the industry. And it will probably also receive a sizable fraction of the $10 billion in federal loan guarantees. Taken together, the package will keep US Airways out of bankruptcy court into next year, something that was by no means assured before September 11.

And US Airways isn't the only airline that stands to benefit from the terrorist attacks. America West was in so much trouble early this year that some analysts wondered how long it could survive on its own. Under the bailout it could receive a few hundred million dollars. Northwest's large debt was rapidly undermining its financial position as well. Under the bailout it will receive at least half a billion dollars. Which raises a question: Why, under the guise of an emergency, are the feds propping up companies that might well have failed anyway?

Since deregulation in 1978, the airline industry has been one of the most volatile in the country. Carriers must fill an average of 65 percent of their seats to offset the huge costs of multi-million dollar aircraft, terminal space, and highly trained employees. But because demand for air travel is extremely cyclical—air travel is always among the first casualties of a slowing economy—it's rare that carriers can sustain that volume consistently. The result is that airlines do extremely well in times of plenty and rack up huge losses during economic downturns. Well-run airlines prepare for this. They stockpile cash reserves during boom times and run them down when consumers retrench. Poorly run airlines don't; during severe recessions they get radically overhauled or go out of business.

That's what happened during the recession and war of the early 1990s. In 1991, one of the worst years in the history of the aviation industry, American carriers lost in excess of $4 billion as domestic passenger traffic fell by 4 percent and highly profitable international traffic fell by more than 25 percent. By the time the economy rebounded, three major carriers—America West, Continental, and TWA—had declared bankruptcy. Another three—Pan Am, Eastern, and Midway—had been liquidated entirely.

And yet the industry as a whole was never in danger. The top three carriers—United, American, and Delta (they remain the top three today)—were well situated to absorb the losses and began recording steady increases in traffic and revenues by 1992, although profitability returned more slowly. America West, TWA, and Continental all reemerged from the rubble, the latter to become an industry power. And while we never heard from the likes of Pan Am and Eastern again, that wasn't necessarily a bad thing.

The same sort of shakeout probably would have happened this time. While 1991's 4 percent reduction in passenger traffic looks like a mere hiccup compared to the more than 50 percent reduction the airlines experienced immediately after the hijackings, no one expects that kind of drop-off to persist once the feds beef up airport security. Which means that, as in the early '90s, the big three should have had little trouble staying afloat. All have over a billion dollars in cash on hand and, as one source close to United told *The Wall Street Journal* last week, could probably "pick up the phone and raise a billion" from suppliers and international banks. Smaller carriers like Continental and Southwest—the only two profitable airlines in the first half of this year—have considerable cash reserves of their own and viable long-term business models. They would probably have weathered the next several months, even if it meant temporary bankruptcy protection. The only airlines that might have gone under for good—US Airways and America West—were already in trouble.

The only real justification for an airline bailout would be a long-term blow to passenger confidence—say, after a second serious terrorist attack or a protracted military effort—that permanently reduced demand for air travel. But last Friday's $15 billion relief package isn't even the right remedy for that. If the demand for air travel is permanently reduced, the industry will be completely transformed—with fewer airlines needed to meet the lower passenger volume. So floating money to companies the market will soon be unable to support would still be a bad use of resources. Again, consider US Airways. One of the chief arguments for propping it up is that it has suffered disproportionately from the closure of Reagan National Airport, which anchors its most profitable northeastern routes. But that argument is irrelevant. After all, if National reopens in the next few weeks, US Airways' $900 million reserves should sustain it in the meantime. And if National closes for good, the company will have lost its raison

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d'être and should be allowed to fail.

None of which is to say federal intervention was altogether unnecessary. United and American, the two carriers directly affected by the terrorist attacks, faced billions in liability before Congress stepped in to shield them from property damage claims and to help them compensate victims. What's more, all the airlines faced skyrocketing costs for insurance against war and terrorism, premiums that increased more than a hundred-fold after the attacks and which would not have been affordable without Congress temporarily filling the gap. And it seems only fair that some of the burden of tighter airport security be borne by taxpayers, whether as fare increases or federal expenditures. But all of that came on top of the $15 billion Congress handed the industry.

"If we hadn't passed this package today . . . a number of airlines would have had a number of their airplanes firmly on the ground," Missouri Representative Roy Blunt announced last Friday, "and they would never have gone up again." Probably so. Except that this would have been the case even if September 11 had just been a normal day. ■

Do fundamentalists fear our women?

Girl Power

By DAVID S. LANDES *and* RICHARD A. LANDES

AMONG THE POPULAR explanations for September 11's cunning, devastating attacks on the United States is American support for Israel. The argument runs like this: If the United States had not aided and abetted the Muslim world's primary enemy, we would not have become Islam's enemy ourselves, and therefore would not have been a target for reprisals. That argument, however, is a dodge. Even if there were no Israel, the Muslim world would still likely feel deep and deepening hostility toward the West.

That hostility predates the formation of the Jewish State, and has its roots in the West's growing cultural, political, economic, and military dominance over the lands of Islam, a dominance that has been building for centuries but was by no means inevitable, and which many Muslims find baffling and infuriating. Hundreds of years ago, Islamic civilization stood at the pinnacle of global achievement, politically and intellectually. Muslim empires ruled over the Middle East, stretched west to Spain and Portugal and east to India and the borderlands of China. Islam was deservedly reputed for its ecumenism, its ability to learn from and assimilate other societies. And then something went wrong.

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Islamic theologians shut down liberal philosophical schools. As a result of this banishing of "heresy" from an increasingly dogmatic Islam, the high culture lost its capaciousness and, hence, its adaptability. In the succeeding centuries, reactionary features of Islamic society hardened: slavery; the exclusion of women from public life; the vast gap of wealth and power separating elites from an impoverished population. At the same time new competitors sprang up in the West, committed by Christianity to an anti-Islamic position and by national ambitions to anti-Muslim warfare. As Muslims lost territory and technological superiority, they sought solace in the truths of yesteryear, in a refusal to sell out to the lies of the infidel.

The industrial revolution only made the imbalance worse. By the end of the nineteenth century, Western power had reduced the Middle East to a sandy piece of worldwide European empire. This formal dominion was later reversed, but by voluntary European retreat, not Muslim force of arms. In fact, the West no longer needed formal empire to profit from its technological and economic superiority. By the second half of the twentieth century, the difference between standards of living in the West and in the Muslim world had grown startlingly manifest and unbearably humiliating.

WHY DID MUSLIM societies fall behind? Given the diversity of Islamic civilizations, of course, and the complexity of historical change, there are many, many answers. But one that has received too little attention—both in the West and in the Islamic world—is the evolution of Islamic societies' treatment of women. That treatment, needless to say, differs in different parts of the Muslim world. Indeed, to take just one example of Islamic society's openness to female power, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Turkey, and Indonesia have all been ruled in recent years by women. But nonetheless, compared to the West, the lives of women in most of the Muslim world are remarkably circumscribed. While Christian theology has, to a significant degree, reformed its backward views of women, Islamic theology has been much slower to do so. Muslim women are excluded from much of public space and, according to the Hadith, Mohammad said, "I was shown the hellfire and that the majority of its dwellers are women." This fundamental inequality makes Muslim societies substantially less productive—not only by denying opportunity to women, but by inhibiting a meritocratic spirit among men.

And the oppression of women may not only help explain why Islamic societies have fallen behind the West. It may also help explain why they find the West so culturally threatening. Israel—where women don bikinis on the beach, attend university in large numbers, and are required to serve in the military—represents a deeply subversive example for many of its Middle Eastern neighbors. Osama bin Laden, in particular, has voiced outrage at the presence of American women soldiers on Saudi soil. Might he be worried that the women of the Gulf are watching them and taking note? For bin Laden

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THE EAGLE, THE ELK AND THE WARRIOR

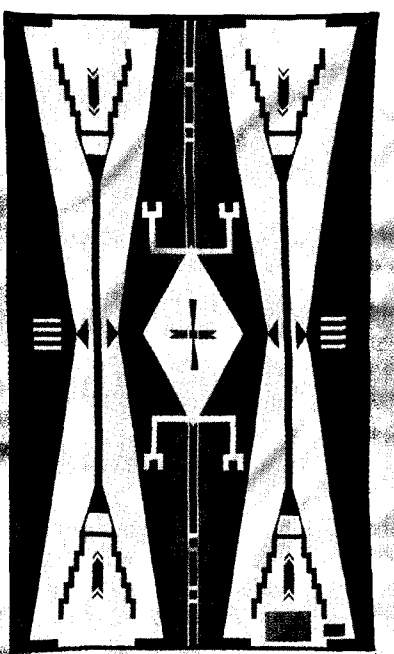
One day, a Cheyenne warrior was hunting alone, on foot. He came upon an elk lying dead by the side of a stream. Trapped in the antlers of the fallen elk was a large spotted eagle. The eagle spoke to the hunter.

"Free me from here," the eagle said, "and I will give you a gift."

The warrior did as the eagle re- the elk's antlers and ree. As the great bird flew said to the warrior, "Go over hill and you will see your gift."

climbed the hill and the top he looked into at the foot of the the same black eagle's feathers. This

The Cheyenne Eagle Blanket is an interpretation of this legend as told by Ben Nighthorse Campbell. It employs traditional Cheyenne graphics and parfleche design elements to retell the story. This limited-edition saddle blanket, measuring 66" x 40", is the third in the Spirit Series of Native American Blankets. It is woven of pure wool by the Pendleton Woolen Mills for the American Indian College Fund.



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and his followers, these are not mere cultural differences. They are evidence of Islam's purity and the West's corruption, and part of an apocalyptic struggle for universal salvation through Muslim dominion. The stakes are cosmic, ultimate; and the duty of all Muslims is not only to reject the adversary but also to destroy him.

Given the depth of Islam's conflict with the West, trading Israel for Syria's or Iran's help in the reprisals against bin Laden will win us no real friends; it will only convince the Muslim world that America can be brought to betray its allies with the right combinations of threats and face-saving formulas. The real work—and, sadly, it will take far longer than even the war against terrorism—must take place within Islam itself. Self-criticism rather than blaming others, receptivity rather than dogmatic aggression, especially to their own women—these are some of the difficult steps Islam needs to take if it wants to regain the glory for which it so desperately longs. ■

Bush's great accomplishment.

Outside In

By SAM TANENHAUS

RESCUE WORKERS WERE still combing through the wreckage of the World Trade Center when stern voices arose to caution us that the war against our attackers will not only challenge America's military resolve but also test its democracy at home. "[A] number of government agencies and their cheerleaders would be clearly tempted to lock the Bill of Rights away in some basement dustbin of the National Archives," *The American Prospect* warned on its website. Which agencies? Which cheerleaders? The editorial didn't say, though elsewhere the magazine published musings about "a systematic breakdown of respect for personal liberties in the name of personal and national security." Even *The New York Times*' Linda Greenhouse, the doyenne of Supreme Court journalists, struck an oddly panicked note: "Times like these—times of deep insecurity, grief and anger—in fact have often evoked the worst of our national instincts." Again, who exactly is encouraging those instincts in 2001? No one, it appears. Just "times like these."

Why so vague? Perhaps because these plots to curb our basic freedoms are nowhere in sight. Yes, the Bush administration has promised anti-terrorism legislation that would give Justice Department and immigration officials additional powers of search and surveillance. But do these proposals really constitute "locking the Bill of Rights away"? And do they really spring from "the worst of our national instincts"? So far the most controversial action of the Bush administration has been to double the length of time, from 24 hours to 48 hours, that law enforcement officials can detain suspect immigrants and foreign visitors while reviewing their backgrounds—hardly a sea change in civil rights. Suspects can also be held indefinitely "in the event of emergency or other extraordinary circumstance"—the kind of open-ended language that, to be sure, can lead to trouble. But it is worth remembering the context in which the new rules were written: Law enforcement officials are trying to uncover and dismantle an extensive terrorist network that very likely aims to kill many more Americans in the months and years ahead. And even with the country in the thick of its most pressing emergency in modern memory, the FBI has declined to arrest members of the four or five Osama bin Laden cells now under surveillance. Why? According to *The Washington Post*, "because the group members entered the country legally in recent years and have not been involved in illegal activities since they arrived." Does that sound like storm-trooper logic to you?

In any case, the proposals now being discussed may well be softened in the coming weeks, as they make their way through Congress. Democratic Senator Patrick Leahy, chairman of the Judiciary Committee, has already assembled his own, milder plan, and any number of politicians and activists—from the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force on the left to Bob Barr and the Gun Owners of America on the right—have loudly defended privacy rights. The "systematic breakdown of respect for personal liberties" appears to be well disguised as responsible, cautious debate.

BEYOND THE GENERAL worries about civil liberties, there is a more specific concern about domestic backlash against Arab- and Muslim-Americans. This is warranted. Past outbreaks of American xenophobia, marked by frantic hunts for "enemies within," constitute a series of ugly precedents. Woodrow Wilson used the Espionage Act to arrest dissenting socialists during World War I. His attorney general, A. Mitchell Palmer, authorized brutal raids against immigrant radicals during the Red Scare of 1919. After Pearl Harbor, California Attorney General Earl Warren, whose name would later become synonymous with civil liberties, helped lead the campaign to intern 120,000 people of Japanese descent, 77,000 of them U.S. citizens. And, of course, there was the McCarthy era, with its presidential loyalty boards, anarchic congressional "investigations," and grand jury indictments.

All these examples offer sobering evidence of what America is capable of during times of real or imagined war. But they all have something in common: They were "top-down," the result of government officials publicly targeting members of specific groups for suspicion, harassment, or worse—and this official discrimination fostered unofficial discrimination by the public at large. By contrast, in the wake of this month's terror attack, leaders and lawmakers have scrupulously rejected such bigotry. Consider Bush's response to violence against Arab- and Muslim-Americans. Some of the worst incidents occurred in the Southwest, including the murder of a Pakistani shop owner in the president's home

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state. Bush could have easily reacted defensively, minimizing the incidents, shunting them on to local authorities, or pleading ambiguously for "cooler heads" to prevail. Instead he declared his solidarity with the victims. He invited Muslim leaders to participate in the memorial service at the National Cathedral and then visited the capital's Islamic Center on Embassy Row, where he warned that attacks on Arabs and Muslims "will not stand." Bush returned to the theme in his speech before Congress and the nation: "No one should be singled out for unfair treatment or unkind words because of their ethnic background or religious faith."

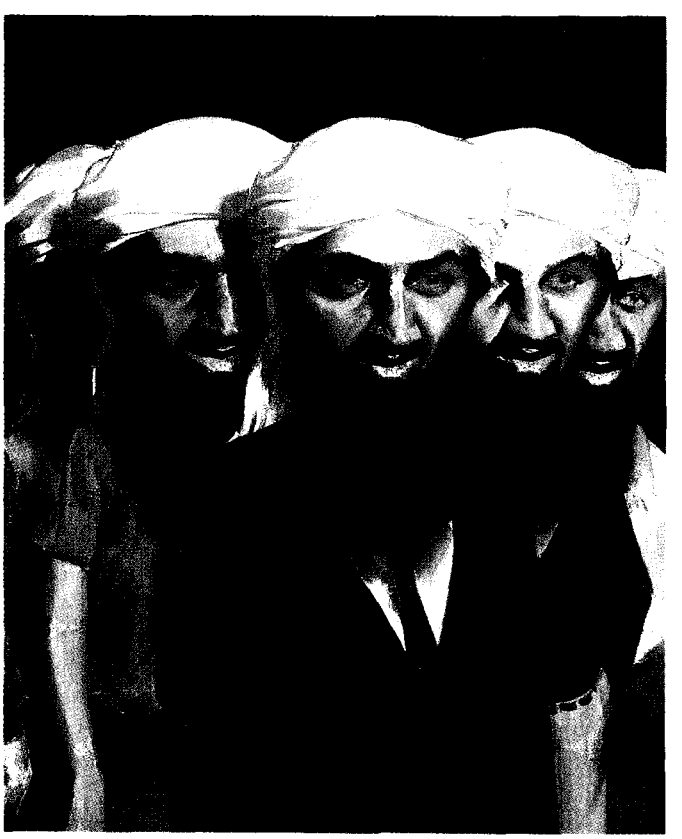
And it wasn't only the president. Moments after Bush's speech, Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle echoed the call for Americans to "be united against the acts of hatred toward innocent Arab-Americans and Muslims and all of those who have come to our country seeking opportunity." Attorney General John Ashcroft, too, despite his dubious civil rights record, has firmly declared that "violence and threats are in direct opposition to the very principles and laws of the United States and ... will not be tolerated." FBI Director Robert Mueller has authorized hate-crime investigations into 40 attacks against Arab-American citizens and institutions—a far cry from the days of J. Edgar Hoover, when the FBI harassed immigrants and refused protection to civil rights protesters. Indeed, not one prominent member of either party has stoked anti-Arab or anti-Muslim racism. Even the venomous frothings of Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson were aimed not at ethnic minorities but at the ACLU, "abortionists," and sundry other liberal "elites."

All of which suggests an important, and underappreciated, development in this crisis. In linking domestic tolerance to America's foreign struggles, Bush has quietly revived an approach formulated during the cold war, when U.S. credibility depended in part on global perceptions of how well our democracy worked at home. The most farsighted American statesmen shrewdly grasped this fact. In *Cold War Civil Rights*, the legal historian Mary L. Dudziak quotes a letter from Dean Acheson, then President Truman's Acting Secretary of State, to the chairman of the Fair Employment Practices Commission in 1947: "An atmosphere of suspicion and resentment ... over the way a minority is being treated in the United States is a formidable obstacle to the development of mutual understanding and trust between the two countries," Acheson wrote. "We will have better international relations when these reasons for suspicion and resentment have been removed [at home]." John F. Kennedy went further, explicitly drawing a parallel between the struggle against Jim Crow and the struggle against colonialism in Africa. "What especially roused the president's ire about both segregation and colonialism," notes Cornell University historian Thomas Borstelmann in his forthcoming book, *The Cold War and the Color Line*, "was the hindrance they caused to the struggle against Communism."

This is the tradition on which Bush now draws. His impassioned reminders that Arab- and Muslim-Americans are full citizens, no different from the rest of us, are linked to his assurances to the world that "the face of terror is not the true faith of Islam" and that the United States has no quarrel with Islamic cultures, only with terrorism. His Thursday-night address, with its condemnation of the Taliban for "repressing its own people" and its assertion that radical Islamists "are the heirs of all the murderous ideologies of the 20th century.... [who] follow in the path of fascism, and Nazism, and totalitarianism" could have been scripted by anti-Communist liberals who believed the cold war was a battle for the "hearts and minds" of developing nations. It is fitting, too, that Bush has turned to NATO, the crown jewel of cold war internationalism, to support the case that the United States, unlike its attackers, is governed by rational, humane principles.

Which, by the way, it really is. It may be true, as Roger Wilkins told Linda Greenhouse, that "a lot of Americans distrust difference of any kind." But how to account for the many Afghans, Sikhs, and others who have been living peaceably among us all these years, accepted by their neighbors? Indeed, even the stories of the terrorists themselves—who blended so readily into their Florida community, sending their kids to public school, driving them to the mall in their Plymouth Voyagers—stand as counterexamples to Wilkins's bleak vision.

American democracy may well face trials in the days ahead. But the contest won't be between security and civil liberties, a delicate balancing act even in the best of times and never reducible to a simple either/or. The meaningful conflict today is between reason and hysteria. Our government seems to understand this. The same can't be said for those who, in the guise of vigilance, appear hungry for evidence that America is becoming the police state of their dreams. ■



DAN ADEL

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K Street tries to exploit September 11.

The Home Front

By JONATHAN CHAIT

PRIOR TO SEPTEMBER 11 the White House and Congress were gearing up for an intensely partisan battle over the federal budget. The available surplus was suddenly gone, and with popular—and needed—spending on education and defense in jeopardy, each party blamed the other. According to the White House and some congressional Republicans, the fault was Democrats' unseemly attachment to the Social Security lockbox, an accounting fiction that masked the fact that we were still running massive surpluses within Social Security, surpluses that could be tapped to pay for defense and other spending. The Democrats, meanwhile, said there would have been plenty of money to pay for education and defense without endangering Social Security were it not for the irresponsible, long-term tax cut passed by the Bush administration in June.

Since September 11 the Democrats stopped making the latter case. And for good reason. In the immediate aftermath of the worst attack on American citizens in history, Bush's critics decided, rightly, not to inflict political harm on the president. And so almost no prominent Democrats made the rather obvious point that the commitment to slash government revenues by ever-deeper levels over the next decade while waging a war of unknown cost and duration might not be a terribly bright idea.

By contrast, Americans have heard a great deal of the Republicans' anti-lockbox, pro-tax-cut argument in the wake of the attacks. And since this argument has been repeated without opposition, it has come to sound less and less controversial, and has settled into the conventional wisdom. As a result the political momentum in Washington is not to roll back Bush's tax cut but, incredibly, to expand it.

Conservatives incorporated the terrorist attacks into their economic arguments almost instantly. "Phony lockboxes must be thrown out the window," wrote Lawrence Kudlow, *National Review*'s economics editor and an occasional GOP adviser, within hours of the assault. "Substantial tax cuts on individuals, business, capital investment and equipment depreciation should be immediately put into place." George Will waited only slightly longer. "Just at the moment when American political debate had reached a nadir of frivolousness, with wrangling about nonexistent 'lockboxes' and the like," he wrote in a September 12 column, "the nation's decade-long holiday from history came to a shattering end." For good measure, he declared two days later that the attack "should banish the recent sterility of political argument, the sheer littleness of budget-surplus fetish." A few days later, even *The Washington Post* included the lockbox on a list of "media obsessions that no longer seem very important," along with such stories as "Al Gore's beard" and "The Redskins quarterback controversy." Paying down the national debt is now widely understood as a silly, prewar indulgence that the country can no longer afford.

That understanding gets our recent fiscal history almost exactly backwards. One of the main reasons for setting aside future surpluses to pay down the national debt, after all, was to allow for an unforeseen disaster. Indeed, it was critics of Bush's budget who warned that it made no provision for, among other things, the possibility of a war. Bush's budget "would leave no funds available for subsequent Congresses to use to address needs that cannot be foreseen but inevitably will arise," warned the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a liberal research group, last January. "Such needs could be military, international, or domestic." It was the White House and its congressional allies, by contrast, who pooh-poohed such warnings, promising that there would always be more than enough money to cover all our needs. "My budget will fund our priorities, from education to defense to protecting Social Security and Medicare," declared Bush in his February economic address. "And when we have done all that, we will still have some money left over." In short, the nation's silly prewar indulgence was not the restraint and prudence of the Social Security lockbox, but the live-for-today, you-can-have-it-all ethos of Bushonomics.

It's true, of course, that we have to break into the lockboxes this year—both parties had implicitly conceded as much even before the terrorist attacks. The important debate, however, isn't over what to do this year. It's over what to do in the coming decade—and that question revolves around the Bush

DAN ADEL

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tax cut. Most people think of the Bush tax cut as the rebate they received in the mail. But the rebates represent less than 2 percent of the total revenue loss. The real Bush tax cut is a long-term ratcheting down of rates that will phase in slowly and will accrue almost entirely to the well-to-do.

Before September 11 conservatives said the Social Security surplus must be raided so the government could use the money to stave off a recession. Since September 11 they have said the surplus must be raided so America can prosecute a war. "The 'lockboxes' that vitiated Bush's earlier promises to restore American military strength," exult Gary Schmitt and Tom Donnelly in *The Weekly Standard*, "are yesterday's news." But the idea that the Social Security and Medicare lockboxes, not Bush's tax cut, ever constituted the primary obstacles to more defense spending is absurd. The lockboxes existed before Bush took office and he—along with almost every politician in either party—promised not to touch the Social Security surplus from the beginning.

Within the universally accepted constraints of the Social Security lockbox, then, a fixed sum of money was available for tax cuts, defense, and other domestic spending. Bush's insistence on the largest possible tax cut meant there was less money available for everything else—including defense. Indeed, even though Bush made rebuilding the military a major campaign speech, he proposed to allocate less to defense than did Al Gore. Upon taking office, Bush poured all his political capital into the tax cut and then gave defense only what was left over.

BUT EVEN IF the lockboxes had not predated the tax cut, and even if Republicans and Democrats alike had not sworn fealty to them, fingering them—as opposed to the tax cut—as the primary factor limiting military spending would be disingenuous. This is because paying down the debt is not like giving a tax cut or spending on a domestic program. It's true that in the short term, devoting more resources to any of these objectives reduces the available resources for all the others. But paying down the national debt is different from tax cuts or spending programs in that it doesn't constrain *how much* you can spend; it only constrains *when* you can spend it. A smaller national debt means less of the budget has to go to interest payments and more can go to other things. (Indeed, the reason we have as much flexibility as we do to build up the military and stimulate the economy is that Bill Clinton insisted on saving the surplus rather than giving in to the tax-cutting urges of congressional Republicans.) In the long run paying down the debt has no effect on how much you can spend on defense. The only real constraints are how much you tax and how much you spend on other things.

So does that mean the Bush tax cut will deprive the military of funds it needs to fight the war on terrorism? Not exactly. We could fight the war and still implement the tax cut if we were willing to starve domestic programs—or run deficits, like we did to finance World War II. It just wouldn't be a very smart thing to do with the baby-boomers' retirement looming. Alternatively, we could fight the war and still set aside the Social Security and Medicare surpluses if we scaled back the tax cut. Since fighting the war against terrorism is obviously the highest priority, the policy variables are basically the same ones as before: tax cuts versus new spending versus debt reduction. The only substantive difference is that there's less of everything to go around.

THE POLITICAL DIFFERENCE is more important. Conservatives are imploring Bush to use September 11 to cast his budgetary ideas in the warm glow of patriotism. A Robert Novak column this week lamented that Bush failed to use his war address to Congress to advocate tax cutting. (Apparently the speech could have been made more Churchillian by adding a ringing call for capital gains tax cuts.) A recent *Wall Street Journal* editorial made this argument even more explicitly. Bush's wartime popularity "gives him an historic opportunity to assert his leadership, not just on security and foreign policy but across the board," it urged, "the phony 'trust fund' constraints on fiscal policy have fallen with the Trade Center towers, opening as much as $150 billion a year in surplus for pro-growth tax cuts." This logic bears a moment's scrutiny: If, as the *Journal* hopes, the agreement to save the Social Security and Medicare trust funds is permanently discarded as a result of September 11, it will only be because the public thinks it needs to spend that money on defense. But the *Journal* editors don't want to spend it on defense. They want to use it for tax cuts. The war is merely an "opportunity"—their word—to pull a bait-and-switch.

Anti-tax lobbyists sought to capitalize on that opportunity without delay. In the immediate wake of the bombing, Ways and Means Committee Chairman Bill Thomas tried to push through a melange of tax breaks for corporations and investors. While the ostensible rationale was to stave off a recession, most of the tax cuts are K Street golden oldies that long predate the current downturn and would do little to stimulate the economy. Thomas hoped to rush the package through as an emergency response, but he was thwarted when even Alan Greenspan—no enemy of aggressive tax cutting—urged caution. (Indeed, the economy is already suffering from a rise in long-term interest rates caused by the bond market's fear that Washington may abandon all fiscal restraint.) But the Republicans will have the opportunity to again take up tax cuts soon enough.

There is something deeply unpatriotic about K Street's rush to turn the tragedy into quick profit. The temptation will be for Democrats to respond in kind, by accusing Bush of jeopardizing our national defense for the sake of tax cuts. They must not. The better response is to separate domestic politics from foreign policy. Democrats should maintain their unity behind the war on terrorism and give Bush all the funding for it he needs. At the same time, they have every right to press their own set of domestic priorities. That means canceling the as yet unimplemented parts of the Bush tax cut and devoting more resources to debt reduction and popular domestic spending. The public has supported these priorities all along. Before September 11 Bush evaded a debate about fiscal priorities by fooling the country into thinking it could have everything at once. This time his allies want to escape it by using the war as a diversion. Democrats shouldn't let them get away with it. ■

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A SCIENTIFIC DISSENT FROM DARWINISM

Public TV programs, educational policy statements, and science textbooks have asserted that Darwin's theory of evolution fully explains the complexity of living things. The public has been assured, most recently by spokespersons for PBS's *Evolution* series, that "all known scientific evidence supports [Darwinian] evolution" as does "virtually every reputable scientist in the world."

The following scientists dispute the first claim and stand as living testimony in contradiction to the second. There **is** scientific dissent to Darwinism. It deserves to be heard.

"WE ARE SKEPTICAL OF CLAIMS FOR THE ABILITY OF RANDOM MUTATION AND NATURAL SELECTION TO ACCOUNT FOR THE COMPLEXITY OF LIFE. CAREFUL EXAMINATION OF THE EVIDENCE FOR DARWINIAN THEORY SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED."

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

From the Inside

In 1970 COSTA-GAVRAS made *The Confession*, a film about the so-called Slansky trial in Prague in 1952. The screenplay was based on the book of the same name by one of the defendants in that trial, Artur London; Yves Montand played London. Principally because of Costa-Gavras's stern direction and Montand's grimly interiorized performance, the film was a chilling plunge into political cruelty and mystery. Now a Czech-born American director, Zuzana Justman, has made a documentary on the same subject, called **A Trial in Prague** (Cinema Guild), that is more obliquely yet at least equally chilling.

Justman, who emigrated to the United States in 1948, has made three previous documentaries about wartime and postwar Czechoslovakia. She was moved to make this film when she discovered documentary footage of the trial, with which she then interwove interviews of people related to the defendants. The result is gripping, not just because of the steamroller cruelties involved—which are reason enough—but because it illuminates, from within, some of the subtler attractions of communism.

The basic facts of the Slansky trial are well known. The Communist Party took over the Czech government in 1948, murdering many of its opponents en route, and set itself up quite overtly as a satellite of the Soviet Union. Stalin was greatly disturbed when Yugoslavia broke from his control in 1948, and he took steps to strengthen his hold on the rest of the Soviet bloc. He ordered a purge in Czechoslovakia, not intrinsically very different from the Moscow trials of 1938. Those to be purged were not visible enemies of the party but Communist eminences. To purge anti-Communists would merely be expected; but for the party to purge itself—that was exemplary and intimidating.

Fourteen Czech officials were chosen—perhaps by Stalin himself—to be labeled traitors, and chief among them was Rudolf Slansky, secretary general of the Communist Party. Eleven of the accused were Jews. (This was a profound shock to other Jews in the party because communism was, in principle, a new order in which there would be no anti-Semitism.) The indictments were prepared, the accused were arrested and isolated, and after some months of what is politely called interrogation, the defendants all pleaded guilty. It was clear then and is even clearer now that these men had been broken and were well rehearsed in their public confessions. Eleven of the defendants were hanged; three were given life sentences. Those three, including London, were released after Stalin died.

Here is just one example of the mind-twisting that was the norm in these proceedings. One of the defendants, a Jew, had been a prisoner in the Mauthausen concentration camp during the war. The Czech party now argued that since the Nazis had allowed him to survive, he must be a German spy. (In *Fighter*, reviewed here four weeks ago, Jan Wiener recounts how, after serving as a fighter pilot in the Free Czech force that had been based in Britain, he was arrested as a British spy when he returned to Prague and was imprisoned for five years.)

The footage of the trial would be ludicrous if it were not hideous. The vicious prosecutor is clearly a stooge fearing for his own life. The defendants sit like robots waiting to be switched on. But the people whom Justman recently interviewed are striking individuals. London's widow in France; the present Czech foreign minister, whose father was hanged; the widow of one executed man, who has placed a stone for her husband in the family graveyard even though his body was cremated; an Englishwoman who had been full of political passion in the 1940s and married a Czech Communist, then moved with him to Prague, where eventually he was hanged—all of them recount events that are like scenes from a Koestler novel, or a parody of one. Outstanding among the interviewees is Eduard Goldstucker, who was a defendant even though, or probably because, he had been the first Czech ambassador to Israel, and was accused of being a Zionist spy. He served four years in prison. He is an impressive man with fluent English; he and the Englishwoman are the most explicit about the enticements and the complexities of Communist belief.

This subject of belief, coursing through the interviews and placed in the context of the footage of the trial, leads to a persistent question. The film does not specify the present beliefs of all these survivors, but it does help to clarify why, after these trials, after the gigantic twentieth-century oppressions in other Communist countries that make these trials look pygmy, many people still cling to communism. For instance, when London was convicted, his wife at first tried to divorce him so that she could remain a pure Communist. But she dropped the divorce suit when her husband was released, as if she was grateful for the chance to remain a Communist. When she and London were reunited in France, they remained Communists. All these people—the defendants and their contemporaries—came into communism at a time when fascism seemed about to gobble up the world. Communism was not merely a program for progress and justice; it was a salvation and a home, a cosmos to live in. Odd as it may sound to us, one of the chief blessings of the party was the sheer joy that it thus provided. When the party did some disquieting things, such as the Moscow and Slansky trials, these things could be seen as necessary genuflections to tactical necessity, not as reasons to forsake this ideological home. As Koestler dramatized it in *Darkness at Noon*, the crux was not whether the accused were innocent or guilty, in conventional bourgeois terms, but whether they would plead guilty as a public act of support for the party. Truth, in other words, was party-defined.

The film does even more in terms of latter-day clarification. A pressing question now for many of us is how, after what is known about party actions in the world, after the collapse of so many Communist governments, intelligent persons can still be Communists. The basic reason seems to be an updated version of what it was for those Czechs in the 1940s—the poverty of alternatives, alternatives that are inspiring. The past cruelties are regrettable to them but are accounted necessary reactions to bourgeois attacks. The economic collapses of Marxist countries are seen as failures of procedure, not of theory. Besides, no alternative belief provides a home in the way that party membership does: a program, a quasi-religion, an implicit linkage with men and women around the globe who are in distress. These twenty-first-century Communists look at the terrible conditions in much of the world and, despite the depravities of Stalin and his colleagues, cannot believe that anything other than communism will fundamen-

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tally improve matters. Assume that they know a remark attributed to a former Prague resident named Kafka: "Every revolution evaporates, leaving behind only the slime of a new bureaucracy." Justman's film, though hardly made for this reason, shows why many concerned people prefer the risk of that slime to, as they think, emptiness.

The Glass House (Columbia) is worth mention for only one reason. It seems the cinematic near-equivalent of a "concept" theater production. For decades, many theater directors have dressed old plays, great and less great, in new production garments in order to bring them up to date. The screenplay of this thriller is literally new, but the concept is antique: an initial situation, seemingly cozy, is soon seen to be menacing (*Kind Lady*, *Angel Street*, *Ladies in Retirement*, and so on). The producers have attempted to freshen up this dusty device by putting it in a slick modern setting: the glass house of the title, an ultra-chic structure on the California coast. But it works the other way around. The hoariness of the plot turns the place into a creaky Victorian manse. ■

Robert Brustein on Theater

No Time for Comedy

I WAS HOPING to do a review this week of the late-summer London theater season, but like everyone else in America I had to change my plans. Writing drama criticism seems very trivial labor after watching the herculean efforts of police officers, fire fighters, and city workers to retrieve the remains of victims buried under the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. How does one continue to evaluate plays in the face of all that grief and all that rubble? It is being said that among the many things destroyed forever by the terrorists was our innocence. They may also have killed—I hope temporarily—our craving for serious art and hard-edged entertainment.

When, for example, will any of us be able to watch a disaster movie again? As has been noted, the spectacle of thousands of terrified people running down city streets pursued by clouds of smoke and debris was already so familiar to us from films such as *Independence Day* and *Godzilla* that it was almost impossible to separate fiction from reality on that fateful Tuesday. Were authentic human beings or crowds of Hollywood extras fleeing toward the camera as two giant buildings imploded behind them? No wonder the studios have announced that they are canceling all their forthcoming disaster films—including an Arnold Schwarzenegger epic about a man whose family is killed in a terrorist attack—and replacing them with patriotic stories, family dramas, and other escapist fare.

The impact on the theater has been just as daunting. The show is famously supposed to go on, regardless of internal problems or external catastrophes. (London's Windmill Theater boasted that "We Never Closed" even during the darkest days of the Blitz.) But this plucky thumbs-up attitude in the face of adversity did not characterize the mood of theater people after September 11. For several days, all Broadway shows were canceled. Five of them have since closed for lack of attendance. New openings were delayed for a week or more. The Roundabout revival of Stephen Sondheim's *Assassins* was postponed until further notice because, as its director Joe Mantello observed, the musical "asks audiences to think critically about various aspects of the American experience," and in light of the murderous assault on our nation, "this is not an appropriate time to present a show which makes such a demand." Especially when the show is about the assassination of American presidents.

In the early 1940s, following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, S. N. Behrman wrote a play called *No Time for Comedy*. Sixty years later, we again find ourselves in a situation where there may be no appetite for comedy, not to mention critical thought. The late-night comedians went off the air for a week, and when they returned all

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Bush jokes were proscribed. It would seem that the only fully acceptable public activities have been churchgoing, praying, and flag-waving. (In the days immediately following September 11, we are told, Wal-Mart and Kmart sold a total of 514,000 American flags.)

So the terrorists accomplished in one brief morning of depravity what had seemed almost inconceivable after three decades of identity politics: they managed to unify the country into a nation of patriots, turning numerous multiculturally diverse factions into a people with a common cause. But at what cost? I fear the effect on civil liberties of a concerted war effort. During the divided days of Vietnam, artists had more freedom to criticize their government than at any time since the fourth century B.C.E., when Aristophanes satirized Pericles's conduct of the Peloponnesian wars. But this nation is now more united behind its government than it has been at any time since 1941. As we again consider risking American lives abroad in order to annihilate an enemy, critical voices may be considered as objectionable as they were during World War II.

The fall season at my theater in Cambridge was intended to be a festival celebrating the Nobel Prize winner Dario Fo. It started with *Johan Padan and the Discovery of America*, Fo's satiric comedy about the adventures of an anti-hero fleeing another kind of religious fanaticism, the Spanish Inquisition, to join Columbus in America. This was to be followed by one-person shows starring Fo (*Mistero Buffo*) and his wife Franca Rame (*Sex? Don't Mind If I Do*). We elected to cancel the Tuesday performance of *Johan Padan*. Fo and Rame canceled the remainder of the tour. "We do not feel capable," they wrote to me, "of performing ironic and grotesque shows, which deal among other things with sex and eroticism, in such a grave state of national mourning. 'The show must go on' and the clown crying behind his mask are stereotypes that we do not wish to perpetuate."

In other words, no time for comedy. In a speech to the audience on the night that we re-opened *Johan Padan* (the same night that our sister theater, the Huntington, was opening the unfortunately titled *The Dead*), I did my best to argue that comedy—like all forms of art—has the capacity to humanize us in the midst of inhuman events. But to tell the truth, my heart was not in it. I did not feel much like being humanized one day after those planes rammed into those buildings, engulfed them in fireballs, and toppled them to the ground, killing thousands of innocents. I wanted revenge. Some of my theater students were eager to know what America had done to make "those people" so angry at us, indeed why we were so roundly hated throughout much of the world. "You just don't want to believe in evil," I bellowed, comparing this question to trying to "understand" why Hitler hated the Jews. I was out of patience at that moment with the way the liberal mind always picks at its own scabs. Against the background of bodies catapulting out of the top-floor windows of the World Trade Center, the self-hatred of American political correctness never seemed more incongruous. (Actually, PC is probably dead as a doornail now, another casualty of the terrorists' flight plan, and sharing a grave with the Peace Now movement, which has been blown to smithereens by Palestinian suicide bombers.)

A few days later, my thirst for vengeance began to diminish, mitigated by a growing fear that our president, inspired by his own frontier America "dead or alive" imagery, might pack on his six-shooters and pick off a lot of poor shlubs in the rubble of Afghanistan. As one commentator wondered, how do you bomb these people into the Stone Age when they already are in the Stone Age? I began to feel ashamed of my previous feelings of indiscriminate belligerence. What we need is a focused police action, not a protracted general war. One of my anxious students wrote to me that she had been a prison guard in Israel and had watched herself grow so "callous and punitive" over the way her ratty charges berated her, smelling of urine and perspiration, that she was forced to request a transfer. She understood full well, she said, the origins of hatred and revenge.

I was even more ashamed when Jerry Falwell, with Pat Robertson concurring, blamed the whole catastrophe on secular America. "I really believe," he fulminated, "that the pagans, and the abortionists, and the feminists, and the gays and the lesbians who are actively trying to make that an alternative lifestyle, the ACLU, People for the American Way—all of them who have tried to secularize America—I point the finger in their face and say, 'You helped this happen.'" He has since apologized. But this was almost enough to make one embrace political correctness. (Far from being the result of secularism, of course, the terrorist attack was the work of fanatical religious fundamentalists who shared the revulsion of our own fundamentalists at America's "moral corruption" and "secularism.")

My student ended her letter by saying that she was "blessed to be able to work in the theater" because of the opportunity that it gave her to "criticize and rebuild my conscience" rather than to "simplify issues into good and evil." That was my blessing, too, and I was grateful for being reminded, in my current state of anger and confusion, of the obligations of art in a bad time, of why literature and drama continue to remain relevant despite our horrifying glimpses into the darkness of the human heart.

Or maybe the arts remain relevant because of those glimpses. They help us to understand, not to excuse, the motives behind evil actions—as Shakespeare was able to suggest, not to condone, the reasons for Macbeth's murder of Duncan; and as Dostoevsky was able to examine, not to exonerate, the political ideas that led Raskolnikov to plunge an ax into the brain of his landlady. It is one of the functions of great art to help us see how the hatred and viciousness of our enemies can begin to infect the brains of relatively normal people like ourselves.

It can also help us to understand the origins of that infection. I want to go back to Conrad's *The Secret Agent*, perhaps the best account of state terrorism in literature. And I want to re-read *The Possessed*, in which Dostoevsky examines the anarchism and nihilism and despair that make a sane man into a criminal killer of inno-

Deathwork

Wake when dog whimpers. Prick
Finger. Shoot up insulin.
Glue teeth in.
Smoke a cigarette.
Shudder and fret.
Feed dog and cat. Write syllabic

On self-pity. Get *Boston Globe*.
Drink coffee. Eat bagel. Read
At nervous speed.
Smoke a cigarette.
Never forget
To measure oneself against Job.

Drag out afternoon.
Walk dog. Don't write.
Turn off light.
Smoke a cigarette
Watching sun set.
Wait for the fucking moon.

Nuke lasagna. Pace and curse.
For solitude's support
Drink Taylor's port.
Smoke a cigarette.
Sleep. Sweat.
Nightmare until dog whimpers.

Donald Hall

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cent bystanders. I also need to refresh my memory of such bracing criticisms of our military establishment as *Catch-22* and *Dr. Strangelove*, because the greatest danger of the moment—with ninety percent of the country in favor of strong military action (an opinion I share), but apparently willing, according to a recent *New York Times* poll, to sacrifice many innocent civilians in the process—is a blank check for the military. As Genet once wrote in *The Balcony*, if we behave like the other side, then we are the other side.

If only for that reason, it is necessary to look past the waved flags, and the silent moments of prayer, and the choruses of "God Bless America," and try to keep the arts in focus. By lighting up the dark corridors of human nature, literature, drama, music, and painting can help temper our righteous demand for vengeance with a humanizing restraint. The American theater presently stands, like Estragon and Vladimir, under that leafless tree in Beckett's blasted plain. The show can't go on. It must go on. There can be no time when it's no time for comedy.

Note: Some people should stick to comedy. Since I wrote this (last week), Dario Fo and Franca Rame have been circulating an appalling newsletter called "Give Peace a Chance." There they attribute the attack on the World Trade Center to "the bloody beasts of capitalism," claiming that brokers were yelling orders into their cellular phones while screaming people were hanging from the flaming towers. "Great speculators revel in an economy that every year kills tens of millions of people by reducing them to poverty," they wrote in a widely quoted passage. "Faced with that, what are 20,000 deaths in New York." Claiming that the Oklahoma City bombing was a white Fascist effort to provoke an anti-Islamic reaction, they also pretend to be in doubt about who armed the terrorists ("Islamic extremists? Rightwing extremists? Mad Zionists?"). Fo and Rame are friends, but this sort of vicious—and fatigued, outdated, and melodramatic—Stalinist ranting is inexcusable. There have been a lot of dumb, insensitive responses to the evil explosions that shook this country. But it is hard to argue for the complexity of art when the stupidest of all may have been written by this Nobel Prize winner in Literature. ■

Why liberals should be pro-choice.

The Right Thing

By Diane Ravitch

I.

A year ago vouchers appeared to be a dead issue, when voters in California and Michigan resoundingly rejected proposals to allow public funds to follow students to non-public schools. Vouchers lost in both states by margins of seventy to thirty. Despite these setbacks, however, the controversy over vouchers shows no signs of abating. The proponents of the idea are continuing their campaign with undimmed ardor, and the critics are left wondering why the issue persists in the face of a steady string of electoral defeats.

Among scholars, too, the debate over vouchers is as intense as ever, not only about whether they help disadvantaged children to get a better education but also about the desirability and the legality of allowing government funds to pay for tuition in non-public (and especially religious) schools. Advocates say that vouchers will help to expand educational opportunities for low-income children who are trapped in failing schools, while critics say that vouchers will undermine the American public school system, promote segregation along racial and religious lines, and violate the principle of the separation of church and state. Owing to the paucity of empirical evidence, it is hard to say whether the advocates or the critics are right; but it is worth noting that the evidence is scarce because of the largely successful campaign to block vouchers.

Three public voucher programs are actually in operation, all authorized by state legislatures in the 1990s. Two of them, in Milwaukee and Cleveland, target low-income children. The third, in Florida, targets children in low-performing schools (which tend to be in low-income areas). The urban programs permit about 14,000 children—10,000 in Milwaukee, 4,000 in Cleveland, a small proportion of each district's total public school enrollment—to attend private and parochial schools at public expense. In Florida, only a few dozen students thus far have transferred to private and parochial schools. There are also long-standing voucher programs in Vermont and New Hampshire, in which high school students may use public funds to enroll in non-public schools, but they are not permitted to choose religious schools.

The Supreme Court has not ruled on the constitutionality of vouchers; it declined to hear the Milwaukee case after the Wisconsin Supreme Court declared the program constitutional. In Ohio, federal district and appellate courts found the Cleveland program to be unconstitutional, but the Supreme Court took the unusual step of voiding the district court's injunction, so that the children can continue to go to school while the case is being appealed to the Supreme Court. Last week the Supreme Court agreed to review the Cleveland voucher program.

The modern voucher movement traces its origins to writings by Milton Friedman in the 1950s and 1960s. Friedman argued, not surprisingly, that the public schools had few incentives to improve because they were a government-run monopoly. If the government gave vouchers to parents to choose their own school, he argued, schools would then compete to attract students and resources, thus leading to overall educational improvement. Friedman's views attracted a devoted following among free-market conservatives and religious parents, but they had no traction in the political world. However interesting Friedman's ideas, not many urban or suburban parents were prepared to take a leap of faith that might possibly threaten the familiar public school.

The voucher movement soon developed a liberal face, focused on the goal of equity for poor children, under the guidance of law professors Jack Coons and Stephen Sugarman. Coons and Sugarman campaigned in California for vouchers as a means of empowering poor parents, and for the equalization of school funding in that state and eventually in others as well. It is the equity version of the voucher movement, not the free-market model of Milton Friedman, that has taken root in

Schools, Vouchers, and the American Public
by Terry M. Moe
(Brookings Institution Press, 452 pp., $29.95)

Diane Ravitch is research professor of education at New York University and the author of *Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reforms* (Simon and Schuster).

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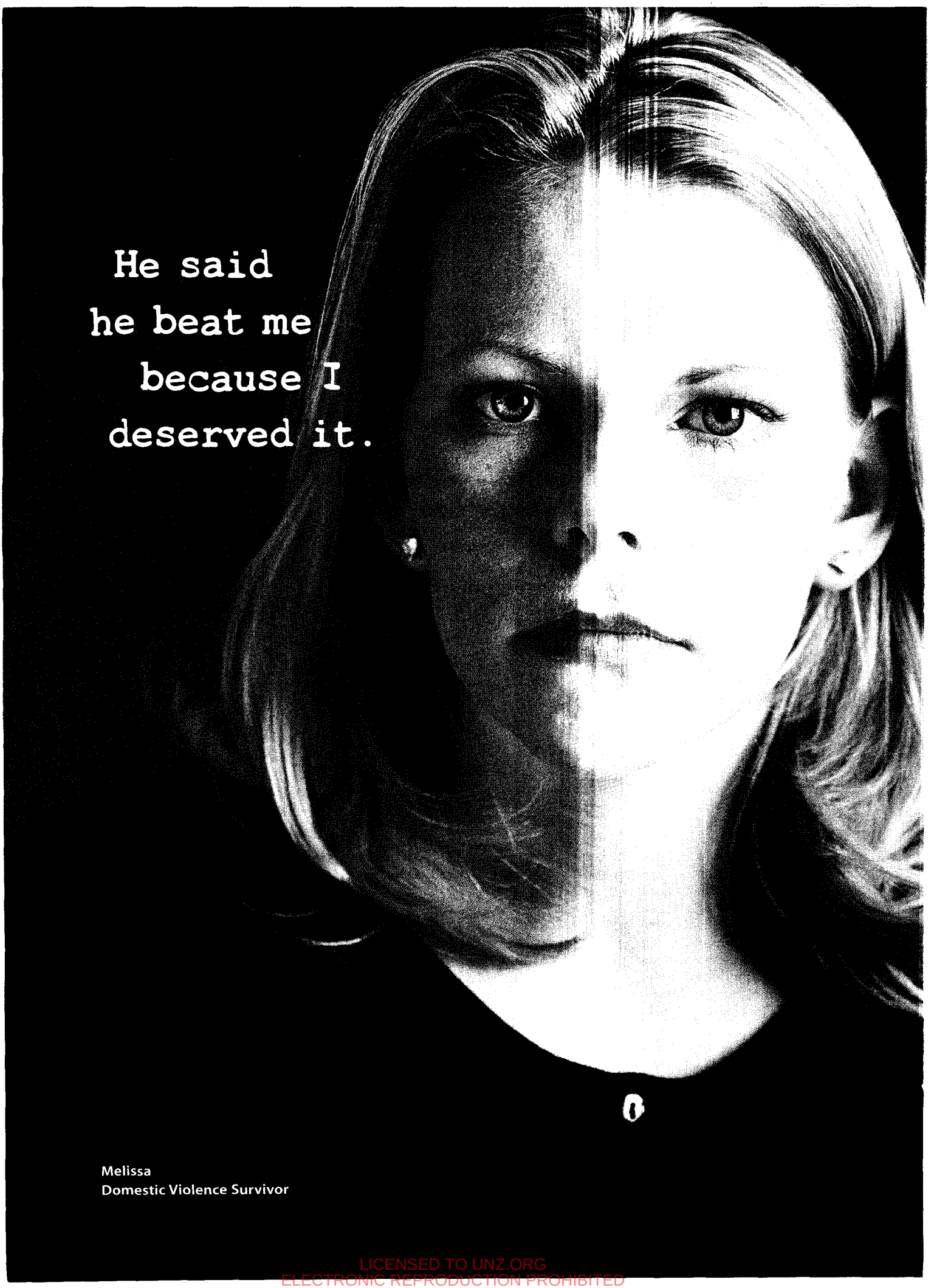

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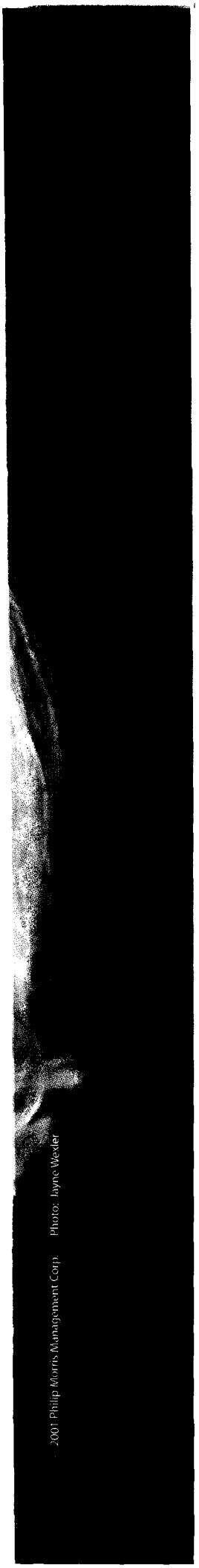

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HELPING END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

"He tried to strangle me last night."

Melissa cried as she wrote these words, eight months pregnant and seeking an order of protection from her husband. Their high school romance had seemed like a fairy tale, but when the honeymoon ended, the beatings began. Terrified, she hid her abuse from family and friends. Once she was finally free from her abusive husband, Melissa began to share her story with other young women, so they would know that no one should live with domestic violence.

Now I know I deserve better.

Too often, society blames victims of domestic violence for not leaving, rather than holding the abusers responsible. The reality is that fear, financial dependency and concern for the children can make the idea of leaving seem impossible. No one deserves to be abused. And everyone should have someone to turn to. With your support, domestic violence programs across America can offer hope and new beginnings. Just ask Melissa.

Recently, we have all seen the devastating effects of violence on our country, and the power of communities that unite to help those in need. If domestic violence is affecting you or someone you know, or if you'd like to make a contribution, contact:

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the past decade.

In his recent book *Choosing Equality*, Joseph Viteritti has shown how the voucher issue evolved from its libertarian roots into a strategy whose main beneficiaries are disadvantaged inner-city children. Viteritti contends—I think rightly—that vouchers have now become a civil rights issue for a new generation of African American activists. Howard Fuller, a former Milwaukee superintendent, and Polly Williams, a Wisconsin legislator, led the campaign for vouchers in Milwaukee to save inner-city children, and to pressure the public schools to better serve disadvantaged students; and so did Fannie Lewis, a city council member in Cleveland.

So the movement that began a half-century ago under the banner of free-market ideas is now directed by a coalition of white conservatives and inner-city black leaders. Its goal is not to supply a government voucher to everyone, but to provide vouchers only to disadvantaged children. (The white conservatives may hope ultimately to achieve a universal voucher, but their partners are interested only in the neediest children.) The transformation of the voucher movement and its prospects for the future are thoughtfully assessed in Terry M. Moe's new book.

Moe's analysis of the politics of vouchers is cogent and balanced. Most of the book is a dispassionate discussion of a public-opinion survey about schools and vouchers that he commissioned several years ago. Moe's dispassion is particularly impressive because he is best known for *Politics, Markets, and America's Schools*, the controversial book that he and John Chubb produced in 1990. Chubb and Moe argued a decade ago that school choice was the reform likeliest to free schools from the dead hand of bureaucratic control.

In his new book, Moe makes no attempt to proselytize for his views. Instead he candidly appraises the strengths and the weaknesses of the voucher movement in light of public opinion; and what he discovers will be useful to both friends and foes of vouchers. He found that two-thirds of those sampled in the poll have never heard of vouchers, and consequently not many have given much thought to the issue. Americans are generally satisfied with the quality of their local public schools (especially if they are public school parents), and they have a warm attachment to the "public school ideology," the idea that public schools bring us together as a society. When vouchers come up for vote, Moe reports, opponents appeal to these sentiments to persuade voters that voucher proposals—whose details are complicated and whose effects are always uncertain—are risky schemes that threaten our public schools and our society. Moe notes that Americans are basically incrementalists when it comes to school reform; they want improvement, not revolution. As he remarks, "Americans like the public school system," and they like it "even when the system is not doing its job very well."

All of this is good news for opponents of vouchers. But Moe also finds that there is a significant latent constituency for vouchers. Most public school parents, 52 percent, would send their children to private school if money were not an obstacle. Among inner-city public school parents, 67 percent would choose a private school if they could afford it. When vouchers are explained to them, 77 percent of inner-city parents favor the idea. Most interestingly of all, the most consistent support for vouchers in Moe's survey comes from low-income African Americans who cannot exercise residential choice.

According to Moe's data, while elite opinion-makers argue vehemently about whether it is constitutional for religious schools to accept any form of public funding, the public is not similarly divided. When asked whether parents should be able to use vouchers (if they existed) at both private and parochial schools, 79 percent of those surveyed agreed that religious schools should be included. This view is shared by 83 percent of public school parents, and even by 70 percent of those who oppose vouchers. Since the overwhelming majority of non-public schools are religious, any voucher plan that excluded these schools would offer very few seats and would do little to expand educational choice.

The public, Moe continually reminds the reader, is deeply ambivalent about vouchers. They like the public school system. They do not want to harm it. But meaningful numbers of people, especially those who are black, young, and poor, like the idea of vouchers, because they believe that the current system is inequitable for their children. In a state-level political campaign, defenders of the status quo are well-organized and well-funded; they appeal to the public's legitimate fear of radical change, with its unpredictable consequences. Voucher supporters can offer little more than promises and abstractions. As long as vouchers are perceived as a dangerous threat to the status quo, they will continue to lose at the polling place.

And yet Moe is surprisingly optimistic about the future of vouchers. He believes that the best hope for vouchers is to mobilize support in the inner cities, where school performance is weakest and parental dissatisfaction is greatest. The free-market model is dead; but vouchers for the poor, with appropriate regulations for accountability and equity, are very much alive. Politically, he suggests, vouchers will fare best in the regular political process, when acted on by elected officials. The initiative route will never succeed because it is so easy to mobilize opposition to change, even (and perhaps especially) when the benefits are targeted to the poor. Moreover, he predicts that mainline civil rights organizations such as the NAACP will eventually support vouchers because of their constituents' strong interest in expanding opportunity, as well as the persistence of poorly functioning schools in the inner city. When that happens, he believes, the coalition of liberal groups opposing vouchers will be considerably weakened.

The most important advantage for vouchers, Moe concludes, is the existence of the public programs in Milwaukee and Cleveland, as well as the dozens of privately funded voucher programs now serving about 60,000 low-income children in cities across the nation. Ordinary citizens can see that the public school systems in Milwaukee and Cleveland have not collapsed, nor have they been harmed by the availability of vouchers for poor kids. Some studies suggest that the school system in Milwaukee has responded positively to competition with non-public schools with its own new reform initiatives. Every time the public sees a photograph of inner-city children in their neatly pressed parochial school uniforms, it reminds them that this is not a dangerous or risky venture. Moe predicts that as more and more students use vouchers without the opposition's dire predictions coming to pass, the public will accept them as one more choice in a system that already offers a wide variety of choices, such as magnet schools, alternative schools, and charter schools.

So why does the voucher movement survive one near-death experience after another? Why does it continue to thrive even after it gets a drubbing at the polls? To be sure, there are true believers in the voucher camp whose convictions are unaffected by public opinion surveys and elections. Losing an election by more than two to one does not discourage them—no more than it would have discouraged civil rights leaders to lose a state or local referendum on segregation laws in the 1950s.

But there are other reasons that the voucher movement does not die. Americans are accustomed to having many choices in their lives: where to live, how to live, where to work, where to go to college, what to believe, and so on. They are sympathetic, as a matter of principle, to the notion that they should decide which school their child attends. When a petty bureaucrat tells them that their child must

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go to a particular school and to no other, some parents must experience cognitive dissonance: why must Jane go to the Kennedy School and not to the Lincoln School, when they are equidistant from home?

Recognizing this reaction, the anti-voucher forces have embraced public school choice, hoping to build a firewall against vouchers. Public school choice has expanded to include a wide array of curricular alternatives, all of them operating as part of the public school system but offering something different from the neighborhood public school. Vouchers, on the other hand, allow students to use public funds to transfer to schools that are operated not by the government but by private and religious agencies. As public schools respond to demands for choice by opening public charter schools and theme schools (schools for arts, technology, business, law studies, and so on), the demand for choice may be whetted, rather than satisfied, by the available offerings.

What rankles those who have no choice in the current system, of course, is that there are ample choices for those who have the resources to move to another district. For most Americans, the most meaningful choice is the decision to live in a different school district that has better public schools. As Moe's survey shows, those who lack the wherewithal to move are the ones who are most interested in vouchers for a private or religious school.

Even if only 30 percent of the population actively want vouchers, they would not necessarily agree that they were wrong just because they were outvoted. If 70 percent of car buyers want only a black car, this would not persuade the rest to change their minds, nor would automobile manufacturers produce only black cars, even for people who prefer red or tan cars. Besides, Americans do not believe that you should give up if you lose an election. Our history teaches us that third parties may lose in the short run, but some of their ideas ultimately are accepted if they persevere.

THE VOUCHER CONTROVERSY presents an issue in which basic democratic values are in conflict. On one side are those who passionately believe that only government-run schools can create a democratic community; and on the other side are those who insist that it is undemocratic to deny freedom of choice, particularly when choices are easily accessible to the affluent. If the public is ambivalent about school choice, as Moe says, there is good reason for their ambivalence.

Some comparisons are instructive. Among the modern industrialized nations of the world, the United States is in a minority on this issue. Of the thirty nations that are part of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, only seven do not permit any government funding of K-12 private schools; in addition to the United States, they include Greece, Ireland, Japan, Mexico, Portugal, and Turkey. The proportion of students in government-funded private schools is sizable in countries such as Australia (25 percent), Belgium (58 percent), Denmark (11 percent), France (16.8 percent), South Korea (21 percent), the Netherlands (76 percent), Spain (24 percent), and the United Kingdom (30 percent). The remaining sixteen nations subsidize private education, but their enrollments are smaller. In this category are countries such as Austria (7 percent), Canada (2 percent), Finland (4 percent), Luxembourg (6 percent), Sweden (2 percent), and Switzerland (2 percent). Yet even these small enrollments are significant: in the United States, 2 percent would translate into about one million children.

In the countries that provide public funding for private schools, the government pays for all or part of the cost of non-public schools so that parental choice (and, in most cases, religious freedom) is not limited by the family's ability to pay. In all instances, the government establishes quality standards and accountability for government-funded private schools. In some, students in the non-government schools must adhere to the national curriculum; in others, they must take the national test; in still others, the private school may develop its own curriculum and tests. Typically, the government requires independent schools that receive public funding to agree to respect the constitution and democratic values, as a way of ensuring that the state is not supporting schools that teach hateful ideologies.

The OECD recently reported that demand for government-funded private school choice has grown in Belgium, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Spain. In the United States, on the other hand, the 14,000 or so students using vouchers in Milwaukee, Cleveland, and Florida are not even a blip in the nation's educational statistics. Even public charter schools are a relatively minor phenomenon: their enrollment grew from zero to about 500,000 during the 1990s, but that is less than 1 percent of enrollment in American K-12 schools.

II.

AMERICANS BALK AT vouchers largely because they are deeply attached to the tradition of the public schools. The idea of the public school—the school that is open to all, is

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funded by taxes, and teaches everyone a common curriculum and a common public philosophy—is a treasured part of the culture of American democracy. Most democratic nations have imitated to some degree the American ideal that education is for all, not just for the children of the elite, even if, as the OECD numbers indicate, most other democratic nations do not assume that only government can manage government-funded schools.

We have good reason to be proud of our public schools. They currently educate 90 percent of our nation's children, and they are rightly credited with helping to assimilate wave upon wave of immigrants in the early twentieth century. Most Americans are graduates of public schools and feel a warm affection for the teachers who educated them. (I count myself among them.) The public schools are, and will continue to be, a central institution of American life. About this there is no question. But there is more to be said, especially about the variegated history of education in the United States.

As valuable as the public schools are, it is important to recognize that there have been many other educational traditions in the United States. At the time that Horace Mann launched his crusade to improve common schools in Massachusetts, there were many settings in which children were educated. Schooling was supplied at home, or by freelance teachers, or by church schools, or by private academies, or by district schools managed by locally elected boards, or by charity schools for the poor. For the first quarter of the nineteenth century, New York state divided up its state education funds among the church schools of New York City, and it subsidized private academies across the state. In the second quarter of the nineteenth century, free schooling in New York City was provided by a nonprofit corporation founded by Quakers. Lowell, Massachusetts briefly supported both town schools and Catholic schools. California's first state school law, adopted in 1851, provided that any religious school that conformed to state requirements would receive public funds based on its enrollment. In 1856, the Texas legislature declared that all schools in the state were entitled to a pro rata share of public funds. The American tradition of education, in other words, was decidedly pluralistic.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, however, two important movements appeared that were unsympathetic to this diversity of educational provision. One was the common school movement, which sought to spread public schooling to every hamlet, county, district, and city in the land. The other was the nativist movement, which was animated by the hatred of immigrants and of Catholicism. As the historian Lloyd P. Jorgenson showed in 1987 in *The State and the Non-Public School*, the common school movement became a vehicle for evangelical Protestants, many of whom were bitterly anti-Catholic.

Some of the most prominent school reformers of the mid-nineteenth century were Protestant clergymen who expected that the public school would be a bulwark against Romanism. A striking number of state and city superintendents were Protestant clergymen who easily shifted from religious evangelizing to educational evangelizing. Robert J. Breckinridge, known as the "father of public education in Kentucky," came to that state from Baltimore, where his diatribes against "papism" had inflamed mobs to attack a Carmelite convent. Lyman Beecher, one of the leaders of the common school movement in the Midwest, advocated the establishment of public schools to head off what he believed would be a Catholic conquest of that region. Beecher's anti-Catholic sermons stirred a mob in Boston to burn down an Ursuline convent in 1834. According to Ruth Miller Elson in *Guardians of Tradition*, her authoritative study of nineteenth-century textbooks, "no theme in these schoolbooks before 1870 is more universal than anti-Catholicism." What American children were taught in their readers was the ignorance, the cupidity, and the tyranny of the Catholic church.

Common school leaders, including Horace Mann, did not want the public schools to be stripped of all religious influence. On the contrary, they wanted them to be suffused with a spirit of nondenominational Protestantism, reinforced by Bible reading and prayers. Mann, a Unitarian, defended the public schools of Massachusetts against charges that they were anti-Christian by insisting that the Bible was to be found in every school and that students were free to arrive at their own religious beliefs. To Catholics, Mann's non-sectarian Christianity looked very much like Unitarianism. It was not long before Catholics acted in their own defense. In reaction to bitter controversies over Bible reading in the schools and to the rising political power of the virulently anti-Catholic Know-Nothing Party, the Catholic hierarchy resolved at the First Baltimore Plenary Council in 1852—a convocation of the nation's bishops—to encourage the creation of parochial schools in every diocese. (Some parochial schools already existed.)

Most of the nineteenth-century legislation that denied public funding to nonpublic schools was sponsored by the Know-Nothing Party, with the purpose of crippling Catholic schools and forcing Catholic children into public schools. In 1875, when the Republican presidential candidate James G. Blaine proposed a constitutional amendment to prohibit the use of public funds in sectarian schools, anti-Catholicism was once again the subtext. (In the rhetoric of the day, Catholic schools were "sectarian," whereas public schools that were thoroughly imbued with Protestant practices were not.) In contrast to today's debates, Republicans favored the Blaine amendment and Democrats defended pluralism. Blaine's amendment did not pass, but Republicans added it to their national platform in 1976. By the end of the century, twenty-nine states had incorporated a version of the Blaine amendment into their state constitutions.

Jorgenson mordantly comments on the eventual influence of these events: "Much later the disinheritance of the church-related schools, a doctrine born of bigotry at the state level, was transmuted by the U.S. Supreme Court into high constitutional principle." These developments, rooted in virulent anti-Catholic prejudice, changed the American tradition of education from a pluralistic system that blurred the line between public and private institutions to a system in which the government became the sole provider of public schooling. By the beginning of the twentieth century, school officials could boast of the public school as a patriotic institution, implying that those who failed to send their children to the government schools were less than good Americans.

In the colleges of education that were created at the turn of the century, moreover, the professoriat saw its future aligned with the establishment of a government-controlled school system. And so it transpired that historians of education, many of them former principals and superintendents, told a story in which the American public school was the triumphant climax of an evolutionary history, and all other kinds of schools were obsolete, reactionary, or merely transitional institutions. This was the tale told in the textbooks written by Ellwood P. Cubberley, the leading historian of American education in the early decades of the twentieth century. (A former school superintendent, Cubberley was dean of education at Stanford University.)

By the beginning of the twentieth century, Catholic and other religious schools had been completely excluded from public funding, but this was not enough for some boosters of the public schools. After World War I, xenophobic groups (including the Masons and the Ku Klux Klan) waged campaigns in half a dozen states to shut down non-

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public schools. In 1922, voters in Oregon approved an initiative to require all children between the ages of eight and sixteen to attend public school. In 1925, in a landmark decision in *Pierce* v. *The Society of Sisters*, the Supreme Court overturned the Oregon law, holding that "the fundamental theory of liberty upon which all governments in this Union repose excludes any general power of the state to standardize its children by forcing them to accept instruction from public teachers only. The child is not the mere creature of the state; those who nurture him and direct his destiny have the right coupled with the high duty to recognize and prepare him for additional obligations."

As a consequence of this decision, non-public schools survived the efforts to eliminate them; but the battle over their right to receive some form of public funding never ended. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, passed by Congress in 1965, made poor students in non-public schools eligible to receive federal aid for remedial services. (Federal aid to education would probably not have passed without the support of urban Catholic Democrats.) *Aguilar* v. *Felton*, a Supreme Court decision in 1985, imperiled this aid by prohibiting public school teachers from delivering federally supported remedial services on the premises of non-public schools. That ruling was overturned by *Agostini* v. *Felton* in 1997. (Trying to make sense of conflicting Supreme Court decisions in this area is an academic parlor game.) Last year, in *Mitchell* v. *Helms*, the Court upheld a state law that gives direct state aid to parochial schools for computers and equipment, thereby affirming at least a faint echo of the diversity that characterized American schools in the nineteenth century.

Meanwhile, though, Catholic schools continue to be closed in the inner cities, as the Church finds it increasingly difficult to underwrite rising salaries for its lay teachers. A decade ago, the sociologist and priest Andrew Greeley predicted that "the first voucher will arrive on the day that the last Catholic school closes." Not many people think that this would be a healthy development for American society, and certainly not for the children who now populate Catholic schools in the inner cities.

IT IS IN this historical context that we must regard the great debate about vouchers today. It is properly understood as a continuation of a long-running battle in American history about the relationship between public schools and non-public schools. The critics of vouchers would have the public believe that the wall between church and state is high and impregnable and must not be breached; but in truth the wall looks as if it were made of Swiss cheese. Today religious schools, especially those that enroll low-income children, receive a variety of federal and state funds for transportation, textbooks, computers, state-mandated activities such as testing, special education for handicapped children, and remedial services. Federal and state funds flow to religious institutions that provide pre-school and higher education, as well as to religious agencies that manage hospitals, homes for the aged, adoption agencies, and other social services. So the argument against vouchers does not really rest on the principle of separation, which is so regularly ignored in the provision of public services. In many ways the wall between church and state has already been breached, and the consequences for democratic life in America have hardly been catastrophic.

We know what the world looks like without vouchers. What would it look like if they became a regular feature of American education? A voucher program at any level of government could only be established by public officials, who would define the eligibility criteria for those who receive them, and these officials would certainly require any schools receiving vouchers to comply with standards for equity and accountability. As in Milwaukee and Cleveland, public officials are sure to establish means-tests, so that a voucher becomes a scholarship for needy students.

This is the conundrum that vouchers present: why are children from impoverished families ineligible for tuition support if they attend St. Joseph's High School, but fully qualified to receive a Pell Grant from the federal government if they enroll in St. Joseph's College a few blocks away? Why is federal funding, and in some cases state funding, readily available to religious-sponsored institutions of higher education? Imagine if our system of higher education lacked any public scholarships for poor students to attend private universities; few other than affluent students could then afford to attend such universities, and our institutions of higher education would be far more segregated by race and income than they presently are. Critics worry about state-supported religious indoctrination in higher education, but we have safeguards against extremist institutions: we may deny them accreditation or tax-exempt status. Surely the same principles and safeguards could be applied in elementary and secondary education.

What would happen to American public schools if there were public scholarships for low-income students to attend any accredited school? The public schools, certainly, have nothing to fear. They would continue to thrive, just as public higher education thrives even though there are federal and state "vouchers" that enable poor students to attend private universities. Both the advocates of vouchers and the opponents of vouchers imply that the public schools would be mortally wounded if vouchers were available for poor kids, but no such disaster is likely to happen.

As Moe's survey demonstrates, most Americans like their public schools, and are satisfied with the quality of education their children receive in the local public school; and there is no reason for vouchers to undermine this general (but not universal) sense of security. Eighty percent of American college students are enrolled in public institutions, and we can expect at least eighty percent of elementary and secondary students to continue to enroll in public schools. And given the limited number of seats available in non-public schools, the proportion shifting out of public schools would likely be considerably less.

The struggle over vouchers, then, will justifiably continue. Electoral defeats and opinion polls, whether favorable or unfavorable to either side, will not end the debate. The debate continues because there truly is a crisis—not in American education as a whole, but in a specific sector of American education. The crisis is to

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be found in our inner cities, and among African American and Hispanic children in particular. The tests that are regularly administered by the Department of Education have shown that there is a four-year gap in achievement in every subject area between white high school seniors and minority high school seniors—that is, the scores of the average black or Hispanic senior are about the same as those of the average white eighth-grader. The graduation rate for white children is near 80 percent, but in some cities, including Cleveland, Milwaukee, Memphis, and New York, less than half of African American students graduate from high school. This constitutes nothing less than a national emergency.

Yes, we should reduce class size; yes, we should increase teachers' salaries; yes, we should break up the large factory-style schools in which kids get lost. But surely the emergency requires more. We must do whatever we can to end the awful cycle of wasted lives—which includes giving vouchers a chance, and thereby giving poor kids a chance to escape the schools that are cruelly not educating them. ■

The Historian as Hero

By ANTHONY GRAFTON

The Light of the Eyes by Azariah de' Rossi translated and annotated by Joanna Weinberg

(Yale University Press, 802 pp., $125)

FOR AT LEAST a few years toward the end of his life, Azariah de' Rossi believed that February 26, 747 B.C.E. was the most important date in world history. And this conviction helped make him the most innovative Jewish historian of the sixteenth century. On that day Nabonassar ascended to the throne of the kingdom of Babylon. Ptolemy, the greatest astronomer of the ancient world, recorded the precise intervals from Nabonassar's accession to later events commemorated by ancient historians and remembered in Jewish tradition: the death of Alexander the Great, for example, and the reign of Augustus. He also dated eclipses, new moons and full moons, and other astronomical events by their distance in years, months, days, and hours from the era of Nabonassar (he was drawing on Babylonian records that did the same). Azariah took Nabonassar as an alternate name for Salmanassar, the king of Assyria mentioned in 2 Kings. Like the spot on a trouser cuff that enabled Sherlock Holmes, a great positivist of a later date, to trace a man's movements through London's muddy streets, this one tiny smudge of evidence enabled Azariah to reconstruct the entire later history of Israel, from the Babylonian Exile down to the fall of the Second Temple and beyond, to the year and often to the day.

Nabopolassar, another king mentioned by Ptolemy, must be the biblical Nebuchadnezzar, who destroyed the First Temple. Ptolemy's evidence set him definitively in the late seventh century B.C.E., a century after Nabonassar. Cyrus, the Persian king who restored the Jews to the Holy Land, succeeded Cambyses, whose dates Ptolemy also established. So he must have carried out his divine mission in the late sixth century B.C.E. All told, the Persians ruled the Jews for some two hundred twenty-one years, until Alexander in his turn destroyed their empire.

For millennia, the Jews had recorded their history by begettings and generations. Chronicles were precise to the point of pedantry about the chains of tradition, the dynasties of priests and teachers who had preserved and taught the law. But they made little effort to connect these events to anything happening in the wider world of Persians and Greeks and Romans—except when the Bible mentioned such events. The *Seder Olam Rabba*, a widely used world chronicle, allotted only thirty-four years to the Persian kingdom, since that sufficed for the kings who appeared in the Bible—even though the vast empire of Cyrus actually lasted for centuries.

Suddenly, as Azariah read and worked, the swarming names and dates crystallized into a single coherent narrative, confirmed by the evidence of the stars. The outlines, the dates, and the details of Jewish history re-assembled themselves in a sharp new order, as if a balky modem had suddenly delivered all at once the elements of a colorful web page. The later history of the Jews now rested on Nabonassar's accession date, like a great boulder delicately balanced on a single point. And the pagan history that unfolded alongside came into focus for the first time.

IT ALL SOUNDS a bit bizarre now—the frantic computations of a Jewish Mr. Casaubon, digging through endless massive books in a futile search for the Key to All Chronologies. But Azariah's work does not really resemble George Eliot's imagined masterpiece of maniacal pedantry. As Joanna Weinberg shows in this magnificent volume, when the Mantuan Jew Azariah the Red sat down in Ferrara near the end of his life and set about computing the dates of world history, he was carrying out something like a one-man historical revolution. Azariah scrutinized the beams and pillars that sustained the vast, enchanted palace of traditional Jewish learning. He used a strong new lamp—the new Christian scholarship of the sixteenth century, in which chronology was the hottest of topics, the first of many structuralisms to become an intellectual fashion—to detect corrosion and distortion. In the end, he proved to his own satisfaction, and to the consternation of some of his readers, such as the great rabbi Joseph Caro, that the ancient structure that Jewish scholars had inhabited for so long was in imminent danger of collapse.

Jewish chronology, Azariah discovered, had left out dozens of rulers and hundreds of years, but that was only the start of his polemic. Jewish scholarship treated texts that had never been meant to be taken literally as if they told true stories about the past. And Jewish histories omitted whole eras—the Hellenistic one, for example, during which Greek-speaking Jews had flourished throughout the Mediterranean, translated the Bible into Greek, and connected the truths of revelation with those of Platonic philosophy. All these theses, and many more, Azariah put forward in the spiraling, densely learned, frenetically over-argued chapters of his *Me'or Enayim*, or *The Light of the Eyes*—the immense Borgesian book, part translation, part commentary, part encyclopedia, that he published in 1573 and republished in revised form two years later. In this extraordinary work he did more than tear down parts of the existing structure: he used astronomy and philology, Christian scholarship and classical texts, to add new mansions where the old ones had stood.

De' Rossi was by no means the only Jew to write history in the sixteenth century. Solomon Ibn Verga, Joseph Hacohen, Abraham Zacuto, and David Gans all

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described the Jewish past in novel ways. Joseph Hacohen, whose work appeared in 1554, proclaimed that he was re-starting the line of Israel's chroniclers, in imitation of Josephus—the ancient military leader and candid traitor who wrote the history of the Jews and told the tragic story of Vespasian's Jewish War, in Greek, in the first century C.E. The Prague historian David Gans took an interest in the inventions and the discoveries of his day as well as in the long tradition of Jewish historiography. He enjoyed cordial relations with Kepler and Brahe.

Yet *The Light of the Eyes* did not look like any of its competitors. Instead of tracing the chain of tradition, human link by human link, or braiding the strands of Jewish and non-Jewish history, year by year, into a chronicle, Azariah wrote critical history. He identified—and sometimes translated in full—the sources on which he drew. He made them the objects of long critical essays, in which he weighed every possible interpretation, often at mind-numbing length. And he made clear, more than once, that he had found errors in even the greatest of the Jewish authorities who wrote before him.

No wonder that his own vast book, though even more heavily loaded with Jewish learning than with Christian learning, failed to become a Jewish classic. Christian scholars cited and praised it; but in the Jewish world, after an early flurry of attacks, it sailed on and on like a great ghost ship, lights burning, flags flying, and smoke pouring from its stacks, until the early nineteenth century. Only then did the creators of the *Wissenschaft des Judenthums*, the critical historiography of Judaism, discover and board *The Light of the Eyes*. They paid Azariah the ultimate compliment of treating him as a peer. Leopold Zunz wrote his life, David Cassel and Zvi Hirsch Jaffe edited and annotated his work, and in due course Salo Baron and other historians analyzed his historical method and argued with him about what they saw as his mistakes.

But this densely technical literature, much of it in Hebrew, largely concentrated on Azariah's uses and readings of Jewish texts and has only rarely attempted to set *The Light of the Eyes* into the other contexts—especially the Christian ones—from which it emerged. Joanna Weinberg has spent almost thirty years studying Azariah's work. A pupil of Arnaldo Momigliano and Chimen Abramsky, she inhabits both of the worlds in which Azariah lived, the rabbinical and the humanistic. Her book is a marvel of learning economically presented. It provides the first full translation of *The Light of the Eyes* into a Western language—and an amazingly clear and accessible one at that.

But Weinberg has done far more. Years of patient and devoted effort in the British Library and elsewhere have enabled her to identify every book that Azariah read, and to work out how he understood—and misunderstood—them, and to compare him with his contemporaries on both sides of the religious line. Her spare, lucid, tightly argued introduction and notes make clear not only what he himself achieved, but also what he owed to others, and they reveal Azariah himself as a newly

"Thus says the novice Azariah": the first page of *The Light of the Eyes*, Mantua, 1573

complex and fascinating historical figure whose only real peer, she argues, was not a Jew at all, but the French Christian polymath Joseph Scaliger.

We do not know much about Azariah's life, and Weinberg lays out with great clarity what little can be established. He was born about 1510 or 1511, and grew up in Mantua, where he studied—or at least copied—works in popular fields of Jewish literature: astrology, exegesis, even *The Tales of Sinbad*. He married a banker's sister, taught, and worked as a censor, presumably deleting passages that Christians found objectionable in Hebrew books. Like some other Italian Jews, he also studied in at least one Christian institution, the University of Bologna. He certainly had a comprehensive Jewish education. *The Light of the Eyes* buzzes with dozens of quotations from the many tractates of the Babylonian Talmud, some of them marred by small errors that suggest that he worked from memory. (As Weinberg points out, the Talmud had been publicly condemned by papal decree in 1553, and it is quite possible that Azariah had no copy of the text to consult as he worked.)

Scholars in the Renaissance were expected to suffer many forms of ill health: Saturn, the gloomy planet, pursued them and made them melancholy, and sitting for long hours over books gave them indigestion, pallor, and worse. Like the good *yeshiva bocher* and humanist that he was, Azariah conformed to type. Fortunately he consulted an able doctor, Amatus Lusitanus, who managed to cure what was apparently a peptic ulcer and make Azariah "as strong 'as a boxer.'" In 1567, like many other Jews, Azariah left Bologna, from which all Jews would soon be expelled, for Ferrara, where the ruling Estensi favored Jews and converts, and even allowed converts to practice Judaism again.

In this city of palaces and poets, Azariah embarked, in the most dramatic way, on his extraordinary career as a scholar and writer. Late at night on 17 Kislev 5331, which was November 18, 1570, a tremendous noise woke the terrified inhabitants of Ferrara. The ground shook, tiles rained down from roofs, and turrets and chimneys fell. On the next day, as the Ferrarese inspected the damage, worse shocks followed, devastating the city: "the earth had become a terror sent from God." Azariah's family and many others barely escaped the earthquake. Most fled to gardens outside the city, where they pitched tents or built huts, or to boats on the Po.

While Azariah and his family lived in the open, a Christian showed him a fascinating book, the *Letter of Aristeas*. This text, written in Greek in the second century B.C.E, told the story of how Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, had the librarian of his great collection at Alexandria ask the Jews for an accurate copy of their scriptures in Greek. Aristeas included a vivid description of the Holy Land, where the High Priest Eleazar gives Ptolemy's ambassadors a detailed allegorical explanation of the Jewish ritual code, and a long account of how the seventy translators whom Eleazar sent to Alexan-

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dria were received there. The climax of the text is the story of how the translation itself was carried out: the seventy translators, working independently on the island of Pharos, all produced identical versions, which they then synchronized. This clever fabricated account, which liberally quoted official documents, established the unique authority of the Greek translation of the Old Testament that came to be called the Septuagint, or the Bible of the Seventy.

Azariah's accidental neighbor asked him if the Hebrew text could "clarify and elucidate some of the passages he found obscure in the Latin" of the translation that he used. Azariah replied that there was no Hebrew text: the story was unknown to the Jews. (In fact, as Giuseppe Veltri has shown, rabbinical literature contains many favorable references to Ptolemy's enterprise: as often, Azariah quoted selectively to make his points more dramatic.) The discovery filled him with elation. "I lifted my eyes to the mountains," he wrote, dramatizing his excitement by using the language of the Psalmist, "to see whether they would skip like rams and to the walls should they move"—and then he set out to translate the *Letter of Aristeas* for "the learned of our people." The result was not just the first Hebrew version of Aristeas, but *The Light of the Eyes*, which began with a long and moving description of the earthquake in Ferrara and swelled to include searching examinations of many segments of Jewish tradition that had nothing to do with Aristeas or the Septuagint.

THE CONVERSATION MAY not really have taken place. Renaissance writers, Jewish and non-Jewish, loved to invent dramatic origin stories for their books. But symbolically, at least, it expresses something profoundly illuminating. Azariah had felt the ground shift under his feet, in the library as well as in the earthquake, and in *The Light of the Eyes* he built a textual seismograph in order to determine what both sets of rumblings meant for the society and the culture to which he belonged. The earthquake of 1570 he dispatched fairly quickly. Natural philosophy could not account for it, and the astrologers' predictions of further disasters to follow had not come true. Only God could have made the earth move, presumably in order to chastise a sinful people. Jewish sages and the Christian writer Antonio Buoni (who, Azariah punned, was "truly ... good and praiseworthy") agreed: "the earthquake demonstrates the finger of God working through the medium of nature." It was a punishment for past sins and a warning to sinners to repent.

But the intellectual tremors started coming long before the physical ones did, and they never let up. They took the form of books, Jewish and Christian. Streams of new literature swirled around Azariah. "I was overjoyed and thanked the Lord," he wrote, "because the work *Sefer Yuhasin* recently arrived in Italy." This chronicle by the astronomer and astrologer Abraham Zacuto, though written early in the sixteenth century, reached print only in 1566, in Constantinople. But Azariah—who, as he recorded in a note in his own manuscript of *The Light of the Eyes*, now in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, felt "very happy about the book for I found that he agreed with my opinion in many passages"—read it before he wrote his own work in the early 1570s.

More powerful shock waves struck Azariah when the Christian scholars of the time launched and detonated what amounted to scholarly bombshells. Though he lived in the Italy of the Counter-Reformation, and wrote his most important work as the censorship of the Inquisition took hold, Azariah had surprisingly good access to the newest forms of international scholarship—even those that might endanger orthodoxy as the Inquisition saw it. The Latin translation of the *Letter of Aristeas* from which he made his Hebrew version, for example, "was printed about ten years ago in Basel, a city teeming with Christian sages." The Swiss city in which Erasmus spent many years late in life did indeed swarm with learned Christian scholars and printers—but almost all of them were Protestants, in many cases Italians who had gone into exile for religious reasons, and the Index of Forbidden Books condemned much of what they produced as heretical. Somehow Azariah read his careful way through many of the dangerous works of ecclesiastical scholarship that they published—as well as the writings of other figures who were problematic from a Catholic standpoint, such as the Protestant Hebraist Sebastian Münster, a well-known convert from Catholicism. The persecuted Jew who died in poverty around 1577, soliciting financial help from Christian patrons but refusing to the end to convert, paradoxically enjoyed an intellectual freedom that most Italian Christians lacked. The cutting-edge scholarship that his liminal position enabled him to read radically changed his way of thinking about the past.

WHEN AZARIAH REBUILT the timeline of Jewish history from eclipses and other astronomical records, he may not have believed at the outset that he would be departing from Jewish tradition. For centuries, Jewish thinkers had carried on a tradition that began in Persia and flourished in the Islamic world. They tried to connect history with astrology. In the twelfth century, for example, the great biblical exegete Abraham Ibn Ezra argued that one of the planets presided over each of the great religions. (Saturn presided over the faith of the Jews.) A particular datable planetary conjunction heralded the rise of each of these sects. Both Jewish and Christian thinkers (notably Roger Bacon) developed these ideas extensively. They implied that it should be possible, at least in a schematic way, to fix the dates of the most important historical events by using astronomical evidence.

Azariah agreed that the stars in their courses had much to say about world history, but he used a completely different key to decode their message. He denied that the planets shaped events on earth. And he worked from sources that lay outside the Catholic canon as well as the Jewish one as he articulated a new approach. In 1543, as Copernicus lay dying, his *On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres* appeared in Protestant Nuremberg. It was Copernicus who first suggested that Salmanassar was another name for Nabonassar, and showed that by doing so one could turn chronology from an art of feeble approximations to one of crisp quantitative precision. His work found eager readers throughout northern Europe, including the Wittenberg world historian Johann Funck and the French lawyer and political theorist Jean Bodin.

Azariah read about Salmanassar and Nabonassar, as he explained, in the work of "Gerardus Mercator, who wrote a chronology of world history both on the basis of Holy Writ and the best gentile writers and on the basis of the stars whose rotations according to Ptolemy are regular." The great Flemish cartographer, who is still remembered for his system of map projection, argued sharply that even the Bible did not provide a sufficient basis for world history on its own. The scholar must use the full range of ancient histories and astronomical evidence to re-create the full context for biblical history and to connect it with that of Assyrians and Persians, Greeks and Romans.

Mercator's *Chronology* did not appear until 1569. Yet Azariah drew his own method from this daring revisionist book, the work of a Catholic whose views on many subjects were far from orthodox. The new data that Mercator—and Copernicus—had assembled gave him the courage to correct the traditional Jewish chronology. Though *The Light of the Eyes* dealt above all with Jewish sources and traditions, its core methods came in large part from non-Jewish works such as Mercator's. Azariah, in other words, was a supremely deft cultural mediator, who

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could wield the tools and weapons of the Christians as deftly as they did, and apply them to texts and problems that they did not know.

As he made clear, even the literary form of *The Light of the Eyes* represented an effort to emulate Christian models. Azariah's book interspersed glossed texts with long critical discussions of a vast range of topics, in a manner that was alien to the traditional genres of Jewish writing but very fashionable in the world of contemporary Christian scholarship. This was, after all, the age of Justus Lipsius, the great student of Tacitus whose miscellany of essays on problems in classical scholarship, published in 1569, made him a celebrity (not to mention Montaigne, whose *Essays* would appear for the first time a few years after Azariah's book, and whose historical consciousness has something in common with Azariah). The antiquaries whose historical work Momigliano made famous offered Azariah the last on which he stretched the materials that he had mastered as a boy and young man.

YET AZARIAH DID more than inject the tradition of Jewish scholarship with intellectual steroids compounded by erudite Christian alchemists. As he went "roaming the paths of Aggadah," as he put it, he made clear that he took a new and critical view toward central aspects of rabbinical tradition. The status of the rabbinical stories and discourses known as *aggadot* had long been controversial. Some authorities seemed to consider them so authoritative as to be on a par with the legal portions of the rabbinical tradition, and many congregations—as the Venetian rabbi Samuel Katzenellenbogen complained—tended to "avoid listening to the laws and look for Aggadot and Midrashim." But others denounced the study of this lore as a way to forfeit one's share in the life to come, or even as a form of sorcery.

Azariah approached the topic in two quite different ways. Weaving together citations from a vast range of Jewish sources, many of them pulled far out of context, he did his best to show that the *aggadot* had been composed not to teach eternal truths but to persuade particular audiences on particular points. "Each Aggadah is said according to the requirements of its compiler," he instructed, "namely to propel people to one idea or another." Unlike the scrolls of Torah, the forests of *aggadah* belonged to the literature of Jewish rhetoric—which explained why some of them seemed to contradict others. They were completely bound to context; they intended to persuade, not to reveal the truth.

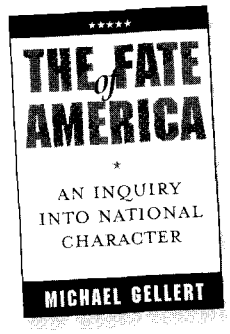
Azariah's other approach was more radical—and more alien to traditional forms of interpretation. He offered a case study, a microhistory of tradition. He chose a tale that appeared in *Pirqe d'Rabbi Eliezer*, or *The Chapters of Rabbi Eliezer*, a ninth-century text, and in a number of other sources. These texts related that after the conquering Roman general Titus entered the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem, God took vengeance on him for the destruction of the Temple. A gnat flew up Titus's nostril, entered his brain, and there grew "to the size of a pigeon weighing two selahs. This was to make him aware that his power was of no consequence." After seven years Titus, now emperor of Rome, died, begging those around him to break open his skull. When they did, they found the bird.

Azariah handled this story with the disillusioned, dapper contempt of a coroner weighing the bodily organs of a corpse. He began by admitting that he had not even bothered to compare the different versions of the story in detail. His reason seems simple, but it was quite daring: any "intelligent person" who heard this story could immediately see "that it cannot be taken literally." The emperor's skull would not have been large enough to contain a bird. Titus died, according to the ancient historians, not of pigeon infestation but of fever. And in any event he died not seven years but approximately twelve years after the fall of the Temple: "This means that at the end of the seven years when, according to the rabbis of blessed memory, Titus's life came to an end, he actually came to power." Historical evidence showed that the story was not only silly, but inconsistent with clear truths about ancient history known from other, non-Jewish sources.

Like the Christian humanists who set out to correct Greek and Latin texts, to detect forgeries such as the *Donation of Constantine*, and to reconstruct the religious and political worlds of the ancients, and who thereby demolished the legendary antiquity that was created and preserved through the Middle Ages in saints' lives, romances, and world chronicles, Azariah proved willing to challenge texts that bore considerable symbolic authority. Like Erasmus and the other Christian humanists who used the Hebrew and Greek originals of the Old and New Testaments to correct the Latin of the medieval Vulgate, Azariah was willing to take his chief weapons from the camp of the enemy. The moral was clear, once again: the rabbis had never meant these stories to be taken literally. They were "an invention and a way of instruction used by those of perfect knowledge" to convince ordinary people of God's greatness—and not only Jewish sages, but also the wise men of other nations, had used similar allegories to similar effect. And the evidence of non-Jewish texts, which proved the point, outweighed the evidence of Jewish ones when tested in the balance of historical criticism.

"When some learned members of our people came to read what I had written about Titus's gnat," Azariah remarked, "they spoke out against me claiming that I had, as it were, impaired the holy words of our sages." He was not exaggerating. Learned readers—notably the Maharal of Prague a few years later—sharply criticized *The Light of the Eyes* for its audacious stance toward tradition, and some rabbinical authorities condemned it. In a Jewish world in which traditions of interpretation were often given the weight of law and divine inspiration, Azariah had taken the radical step of historicizing them. He dared to show that the utterances of the sages had to be read in context, and weighed against other sources and other forms of knowledge. Two hundred fifty years later, when Leopold Zunz set out to create a historical "Science of Judaism," he began in a very similar vein, by historicizing Rashi, showing that the great commentator had been not an omniscient sage but a medieval exegete and philosopher, whose knowledge in many fields had become completely obsolete. No wonder that he and others felt an elective affinity with Azariah.

Yet Azariah was more than a critic of



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old traditions: he was also a builder of new histories. Confronted with Latin translations of the works of Philo, the ancient Jewish Platonist of Alexandria, he was delighted to find that this "great philosopher, well versed in the works of Plato and Aristotle," also believed in one god, and angels, and the authority of Torah, and often used metaphors and arguments that reminded Azariah vividly of the rabbis. Yet Philo worried Azariah, since he frequently went wrong—as when he allegorized "several stories ... in the Torah which absolutely and certainly happened and saw the light of day." When Philo argued that "the belief in the literal account of the creation extended over six separate days is popular and unfounded," he treated "the perfect Torah" as if it were "a piece of poetry." He also made mistakes on all manner of technical questions—as when he insisted, for example, that only priests could carry out ritual slaughter.

But as Azariah pursued his investigation, the world shifted around him once again. Philo's mistakes transformed themselves into clues. Philo, he realized, had been a Jew, but one who "grew up in the Greek world and despite all his wisdom and fluency never saw nor knew the actual original text of Torah." He could read neither Hebrew nor Aramaic. Many of his errors in reading the Bible stemmed from his purely Hellenic culture, since he had to rely on the imperfect Greek translation of the Old Testament. At the same time, his case offered stunning new information on the Judaism of his day—information that no Hebrew source provided. Philo provided a rich account of the beliefs of the Essenes, whom Azariah immediately recognized as members of a forgotten Jewish sect, "eager to understand the Torah." And he exemplified a kind of Judaism that no longer existed in Azariah's time but fascinated him, cultured Jewish humanist and lover of the ancient philosophers that he was.

As in other cases, so in Philo's case, Azariah could not decide what verdict to issue about the man himself: "I shall call him neither Rav [rabbi or master] nor sage, heretic nor sceptic." As to the historical evidence that Philo offered, however, he felt no uncertainty at all. Philo's work opened a window on what scholars would much later call the lost world of Hellenistic Judaism: a world in which Jewish ritual and even the Torah itself took more than one form, and in which the teachings of the Greek philosophers mingled freely with those of Moses in the minds and the works of writers who revered the Torah, observed the commandments, and attended services in their own great Greek-speaking temple in Alexandria, in the midst of the Egyptians. The Jewish past would never again look as coherent as it once had. Even if it took centuries for modern Jewish scholars to follow up on the implications of Azariah's discoveries, Christian historians of the Jews began doing so almost at once.

AZARIAH DID NOT always come down on the side of reason and progress—or what looks like it now. He clearly saw—thanks to the critical arguments of the Christian scholar Münster—that the popular *Yosippon* was a medieval re-writing of the works of the historical Josephus, not their Hebrew source; but he never condemned the text unequivocally. He knew the arguments of Elias Levita, who held that the Masoretes of Tiberias ceded the vowel points to the Hebrew Bible in the first millennium C.E.; but he rejected Elias's theory, even though he knew very well that all texts, sacred and profane alike, are transmitted by humans and change in the course of time, and he insisted that the vowels went back to Moses himself. He accepted not only the most up-to-date arguments of Copernicus and Mercator, but also the alluringly detailed texts of ancient historians from Babylon and Persia that the Dominican theologian Annius of Viterbo had forged, just before 1500, in order to drive evil Greek historians like Herodotus and Thucydides off the market. *The Light of the Eyes* contains translations of two of these fakes, as well as Azariah's version of the *Letter of Aristeas*.

Azariah commands respect even when his detailed arguments go wrong or his historical criticism falls into incoherence. The range and the depth of his scholarship, his critical sense, and his willingness to depart from received ideas of every kind, though he belonged to a community in which such ideas bore the chrism of age and holiness, make his book as exciting as it is enormous. So does his deep common sense. Though Azariah was fascinated by the mysterious numbers of chronology, he refused to believe that history revealed patterns, numerological or astrological, and he was contemptuous of efforts to predict the future. He bore up well under criticism, continuing to do work of the highest originality on the Syriac texts of the Gospels as well as to reply to his critics.

His case still challenges and provokes the historian. If ancient and modern writings not read in the medieval Jewish world gave him new questions and no information, what made Azariah himself take an interest in them? Why did he accept the methods and sources of Christian scholars? What put the light in his eyes? Yosif Hayim Yerushalmi argued, in *Zakhor*, that Azariah and the other Jewish historians of the sixteenth century wrote as they did because the chain of tradition had been broken. For centuries, Jews had preserved the past in memory and liturgy. Now they looked at it in a different way. The experience of exile—the great tragedy of the expulsion from Spain and southern Italy—forced Jews to realize that they were living in the terrible time of history, and to devise ways of writing about this that departed from earlier Hebrew genres.

That would be one explanation for the light in Azariah's eyes. But Robert Bonfil, another immensely erudite historian of the Jews, has sharply criticized Yerushalmi. Most of the Jewish historical works that appeared in the sixteenth century, he points out, belonged to traditional genres, and reflected little or no sense of historical change and distance. Azariah, for his part, responded not so much to the exile from Spain as to the growing oppression that Jews were experiencing in his own time. The Counter-Reformation papacy pressed the Jews hard—especially in the papal states, to which Bologna belonged. In the Roman ghetto, Jews were forced to listen to sermons designed to convert them, and thwacked by disciplinarian friars when they spoke or nodded off.

At the same time, a new literature about the Jews, largely written by converts and Christians, claimed to expose the truth about Jewish rituals and Jewish society. The new ethnographies claimed objectivity, but often presented the Jews, already victims of many forms of oppression, with a stately bill of new accusations about superstitious practices and foolish beliefs. Azariah, in Bonfil's account, set out to defend what he saw as the core of Judaism against these forms of outside pressure, and used non-Jewish sources to fight the enemies of his people with their own weapons.

WEINBERG AGREES THAT Azariah sometimes wrote polemically against Christians, as when he asserted the antiquity of the Hebrew vowels. But she offers a different explanation, and it has much to be said for it. Azariah, she points out, had a great deal in common with one particular Christian scholar, whom he did not know and whose great books he did not live to read. Joseph Scaliger became, in the 1580s and the 1590s, the most celebrated polymath in Europe's great age of polymathy. He devoted himself to chronology, one of Azariah's favorite subjects, and he studied it in the same interdisciplinary way. He, too, singled out 747 B.C.E. as the key date in ancient history (though he insisted that Nabonassar was not Salmanassar, but the king of an independent Babylon). He, too,

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reported his results in hard print even when they had troubling implications for the authority of religious tradition—as they did when Scaliger discovered that the history of ancient Egypt seemed to have begun not only before the Flood, but before the Creation.

Scaliger, like Azariah, discovered Hellenistic Judaism; steeped himself in Philo, Josephus, and the Essenes; and used what he found to re-create the context of early Christianity—which he treated, in the first instance, as a transformation of existing Jewish rituals and beliefs. He, too, rejected astrology and prophecy, insisting that the study of history had nothing to do with efforts to predict the immediate or distant future. And he, too, provoked outcries from injured traditionalists in more than one camp. A fervent Calvinist by conviction, Scaliger pursued chronology wherever the sources led him, and dismayed the dominies in Geneva. Theodore Beza and other Calvinist divines sent Scaliger lengthy criticisms of his work, which he dismissed as contemptuously as he did the attacks of the Jesuits.

What mattered to Scaliger, in the end, was the truth: not what the theologians knew the record should say, but what it did say. By the end of his life, he confessed in private to his pupils that he "did not dare" publish what he had discovered about the manifest errors and inconsistencies in the Old and New Testaments—though he would have done so at once for any secular work. Yet in his publications he made clear that one must study the Bible with the same philological methods that one applied to Catullus or Livy, and that the Hebrew Bible itself was far from a complete or perfectly reliable record of the past.

Azariah loved Israel. He bedusted himself in the dust of his masters, as the ancient rabbis urged. But when he sat down to formulate his deepest convictions, he found himself defending not tradition but truth, and he clung to his independent views and novel methods even when doing so landed him in hot theological water. It seems implausible that he attacked the factual status of *aggadot* as part of an effort to defend Jewish tradition against all opponents. Weinberg explains his work, rather, as the result of a genuine effort to find out the truth about the past and the sources of Jewish tradition. Certainly Azariah had prejudices and made mistakes; and so did Scaliger. But both men seem to have been linked above all by an irresistible desire to know what had really happened—as well as by their stunning ability to identify the hard core of historical fact in what remain difficult and contentious sources.

At this point Weinberg takes us furthest from the present and deepest into a world that we have lost. Azariah and Scaliger, she argues, set out on their unending journeys through the forests of the past not in order to win positions or to influence people, or to respond to their biographical or historical circumstances, but because they thought it was the right way to learn the truth. They cut their own paths through the sources, even though they lived in a confessional age when many honorable but more ordinary spirits avoided the dangers of iconoclasm and non-conformity. Their passion for the real past, and only that passion, enabled them to turn authoritative traditions into history and to forge histories from previously ignored traditions. That passion explains why they became so excited about so obscure a date as February 26, 747 B.C.E. That passion explains why both of them, for all their religious differences, could make productive use of both Jewish and Christian sources and methods. That passion, even more than their gifts as linguists and their great memories, made them great scholars, in the true sense of that overused term.

Weinberg shares this passion herself, and her simple-hearted effort to see Azariah as he was imbues her work with a rare purity. Nowadays, we are all much too knowing to believe that we can ever know the truth. Every rose has its canker: every intellectual enterprise, however abstruse, difficult and forbidding, has its roots in ideology and interest. So they tell us, at least, in sophisticated places. Weinberg knows better—and so did Azariah. For this reason, her book is a moral accomplishment as well as an intellectual one. And she has these accomplishments in common with the great Jewish scholar to whom she has devoted her career, and whose work she has now brought back to life. ■

Female Difficulties

By Lawrence Lipking

Fanny Burney: A Biography by Claire Harman

(Alfred A. Knopf, 417 pp., $30)

No writer is more excruciating than Frances Burney. At her best she moves readers to squirm or to shut their eyes. The account of her mastectomy, performed with only a wine cordial for anesthetic, has lately become a standard text in medical schools, not to mention in English and Women's Studies departments. The scene is a house in Paris in 1811, where "7 men in black" abruptly enter the patient's room. Compelled against modesty to remove her robe, she is placed on two old mattresses, with a handkerchief over her face; but "bright through the cambric, I saw the glitter of polished Steel." Her right breast cannot be saved. Although she screams and briefly faints, she takes in every detail: the moment when air rushes into the wound "like a mass of minute but sharp & forked poinards"; when the surgeon, tired from cutting flesh against the grain, is forced to shift the knife to his left hand; when, after the breast is gone, one doctor points his finger—"which I literally *felt* elevated over the wound, though I saw nothing, & though he touched nothing"—to indicate that the scraping must go on. At last it is done. Arms dangling, enfeebled, she opens her eyes: "& I then saw my good Dr. Larrey, pale nearly as myself, his face streaked with blood, & its expression depicting grief, apprehension, & almost horror."

Burney herself could hardly bear to write this down. She did it, she claimed, to let her relatives in England know that she had survived—though, as Claire Harman suggests, she also must have wanted them to feel her pain. This writer is good at keeping one eye on her audience, as when she observes the hardened army surgeon Larrey in sympathetic anguish. One might call such a woman a control freak. During the operation she is remarkably strong: when no one will hold her breast up for examination, she does it herself. But the strength to call back these details and to fix them on paper seems equally impressive. By writing, Burney proves that she is alive.

Her novels are excruciating, too. The plots depend on subjecting a morbidly

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sensitive and inhibited heroine to impossible pressures. Rakes and boors publicly woo her just as the man she admires is passing by. Hysterical acquaintances extort money from her by threatening suicide. A brother from hell plays tricks that leave her at the mercy of scoundrels. Reluctantly forced to perform, she is frozen by stage fright. Tyrannical matrons demand to be told the very secret that she has sworn to keep. Her best friends misjudge and abandon her. And things get worse until death seems the only way out.

Often a few frank words would clear up the mess, but rigid ideas of conduct choke the heroine, and hundreds of pages must pass before she can speak. Technically these novels graft Samuel Richardson's psychological tensions and moral scruples onto Tobias Smollett's rough humor and cruel practical jokes. But Burney's capacity for embarrassment is all her own. Her journals display its presence throughout her life, as in a wonderful scene in Kew Gardens when she frantically runs away from George III (whose madness was temporarily in remission) while the poor king puffs after her, calling, "Miss Burney! Miss Burney!" There is always some comic potential in these plights. Even the ghastly mastectomy resembles a theater of the absurd—Ionesco, perhaps—as the seven abashed men in black hang their heads while the little lady takes charge. But the embarrassment spreads through the later novels until it envelops the reader. Many readers simply cannot stand it.

To be embarrassed through and through requires a keen sense of social decorum. Burney's heroines have thin skins; they are prudes surrounded by snobs. The modern British class system had just begun to come into its own in Burney's time, and she was the earliest novelist to catch its fine points. Samuel Johnson was tickled by Mr. Smith, the "Holborn beau" in *Evelina*: "'Oh, Mr. Smith, Mr. Smith is the man!' cried he, laughing violently. 'Harry Fielding never drew so good a character!—such a varnish of low politeness!—such a struggle to appear a gentleman!'" Mr. Smith and his ilk, the brazen middle classes, feel no shame. But for Evelina, who does not know her place but hopes to rise, a social gaffe is an earthquake.

Extreme self-consciousness also marks this sensitive creature. The screws of embarrassment tighten fast when the shamed one notices other people noticing her. Like her heroines, Burney was very self-conscious. The greatest value of the mastectomy narrative, according to Harman, "is as a testimony to the inviolability of the ego." If that is so, the later novels might be considered assaults on the ego that test how much anxiety it can endure before it breaks. Small debts and social snubs accumulate like straws until the heroine is crushed beneath their weight. There is nothing quite like this in fiction, except for the desolate *Ultima Thule* (1929) by Ethel Richardson Robertson ("Henry Handel Richardson"), in which the mills of debt grind down the soul, a penny at a time. Burney's typical heroine does better; eventually she gets back on her feet. But first she must travel to ultima Thule, where no one knows her name.

Names are one of Burney's obsessions, in fact. In her first novel, Evelina goes by the partially anagrammatic alias of Miss Anville until, at the very end, she can sign herself truly Belmont. Cecilia, in the novel named after her, must give up her fortune because her husband refuses to take her surname. And in *The Wanderer*, Burney's last novel, the anonymous heroine resists all attempts to find out who she is.

> The stranger, compelled to speak, said, with an air of extreme embarrassment, "I am conscious, Madam, how dreadfully all appearances are against me! Yet I have no means, with any prudence, to enter into an explanation: I dare not, therefore, solicit your good opinion, though my distress is so urgent, that I am forced to sue for your assistance,—I ought, perhaps, to say your charity!"
>
> "I don't want," said Mrs. Maple, "to hear all that sort of stuff over again. Let me only know who you are, and I shall myself be the best judge what should be done for you. What is it, then, once for all, that you call yourself? No prevarications! Tell me your name, or go about your business."
>
> "Yes, your name! your name!" repeated Elinor.
>
> "Your name! your name!" echoed Selina.
>
> "Your name! your name!" re-echoed Ireton.
>
> The spirits and courage of the stranger seemed now to forsake her; and, with a faultering voice, she answered, "Alas! I hardly know it myself!"

Hundreds of pages later she turns out to be Juliet, whose eponym thought a rose by any other name would smell as sweet. Yet even then her lineage remains a secret. The role of Nobody suits Burney's heroines. A good family name would protect these orphans, but they must wander naked through the world. Society shuns an unidentified woman; like a great wine without its label, she loses her value.

All writers care about names, but Burney is special. In her view they often betray the self, exposing it to an inquisitive public. If names protect respectable persons, they also broadcast our identities and make them vulnerable to loudmouths. No wonder British schoolboys keep their given names to themselves. When I was growing up, the women in my family all called me Laurie. Thank God my classmates never knew; each of us needs a little space to be private. Most people live with a secret about what they or their family used to be called. The secret of the upwardly mobile Burneys was that they were descended from plebeian MacBurneys. The novelist suppressed her father's account of his early years, lest it open "to the publick view a species of Family degradation to which the name of Burney now gives no similitude." Such delicacy is understandable. Would anyone like to be known to the public as Fanny?

PROBABLY NOT. THE famous novelist never put her name to a work until, in her eightieth year, she published *Memoirs of Doctor Burney* (1832) "arranged ... by his daughter, Madame d'Arblay." After her death, when a selection of her diaries and letters was edited by a niece, once again her aristocratic married name, Madame d'Arblay, appeared on the title page. Later editions called her Frances Burney. It was only in the twentieth century that editors, biographers, and critics began regularly to make free with "Fanny," as if joining the family circle or cuddling a pet. Hence the once anonymous, dignified writer became everyone's intimate friend. How chummy; how condescending.

Naming a writer, like naming a baby, requires some care. Joyce Hemlow, the leading Burney scholar of modern times, earned the right to use a familiar name: having spent her life editing the journals and letters, she knew the ins and outs of Fanny at least as well as Madame d'Arblay did. But Hemlow's biography, *The History of Fanny Burney*, which appeared in 1958, is cannily titled. By conjuring up a novel, such as *The History of Tom Jones* (whom nobody calls Thomas), it promises to tell the story of a character, not the life of an author. In practice Hemlow varies her style, replacing "Fanny" sometimes with "Fanny Burney" and later with "Madame d'Arblay." Other biographies—there are at least a dozen—tend to be still less formal. Anyone willing to plunge into millions of words can get to know Fanny. For seventy years her journals recorded the daily adventures and feelings that mattered to her, admitting readers posthumously to the nooks of her soul. Longtime companions do not stand on ceremony.

But lately Frances Burney has been making a comeback. As their titles imply, Margaret Anne Doody's *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works* (1988) and Janice Farrar Thaddeus's *Frances Burney: A Literary Life* (2000) put the writer first and

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take her too seriously to pose as her friend. Doody's book, opinionated and brilliant, champions a great, misunderstood writer who challenged the values of her age and would challenge ours, too, if we bothered to read all the novels. Earlier critics had doted on *Evelina; or The History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World* (1778), an entertaining comedy of manners that provides an easy bridge from the eighteenth century to Jane Austen. But the later three novels are far less amusing, and not much like Austen's. *Cecilia; or Memoirs of an Heiress* (1782) sinks its idealistic heroine in a society ruled by money and pride of birth, drains her fortune, thwarts her love, and drives her out of her mind; even the happy ending is murky and rueful. The heroine goes through a wringer again in *Camilla; or A Picture of Youth* (1796), in which tiny indiscretions and the inability of men and women to communicate their true feelings gradually build from scenes of comic embarrassment to Gothic psychological tortures.

Despite their length and their tribulations, these novels sold well; and Austen herself, in *Northanger Abbey*, hailed both *Cecilia* and *Camilla* as works "in which the greatest powers of the mind are displayed, in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humor are conveyed to the world in the best chosen language." (The title of *Pride and Prejudice* comes from *Cecilia*.) But almost nobody liked *The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties* (1814). Fanny could never have written such a book, engaged with the burdens that women face in making a living, elaborately stilted in style, and mystifyingly plotted. This novel must have been perpetrated by Madame d'Arblay.

Yet critics who value Frances Burney most as a writer are likely to regard the perplexities and the wanderings of her later novels as points of honor, precisely because she comes to grips with "female difficulties." Even her doubts about writing fiction, which respectable people such as her father associated with frivolous entertainment or "degradation" (according to the preface to *The Wanderer*), authenticate her commitment to telling the whole unpleasant truth. In these novels, as in the actual lives of women, marriage is not the solution to every problem. It is rather a way of stirring up still more problems. Hence the plots keep turning and turning. And so do the sentences, as they labor to pack improving sentiments into the simplest description. These turgid to-ings and fro-ings are not easy to follow; they alienate many readers. For more sympathetic critics, however, alienation is just the point. A woman who understands the world in which she lives can hardly make her stories turn out well.

FOR POPULAR APPEAL, though, nothing beats a Cinderella story. As a storyteller and a self-inventor, Fanny the person will always be more satisfying than Frances the serious writer. The journals provide the stuff of fairy tales: a little nobody makes good. Fanny herself appreciated the mythic potential of her rise to fame as "an accidental author." Born in 1752 into a large family of social climbers whose patriarch, the music teacher and historian Charles Burney, emerged from obscurity and eventually flourished in the high society of London, she seemed at first a backward child. Her older sister Esther ("Hetty") thrilled the public as a ten-year-old virtuosa on the harpsichord; another precocious sister, Susanna (Susan), three years younger than Fanny, learned to read before she did. One family friend called Fanny "the little dunce" (she may have been dyslexic). In any event, she kept shyly in the background.

Her situation became still worse in 1762, when her mother died. Fanny's busy, grieving, much-adored father neglected her, and after he re-married his new wife fell into the role of "Family Scourge," a jealous stepmother and rival for the patriarch's affection. But at fifteen Fanny began her climb to the light; she started a journal addressed to Nobody, her kindred spirit. Gradually, in secret, she honed her art, while quietly keeping a sharp satiric eye on London manners. Early in 1778 a new novel about a young lady's entrance into the world made a sensation. Only a few people knew who had written it. Charles Burney and his wife were not among them.

Quite soon Cinderella put on her slipper. As everyone, including her father, sang the praises of *Evelina*, the author's cover was quickly blown and Fanny was taken up by people of fashion and the literary elite. Samuel Johnson and Hester Thrale welcomed her into their circle; Edmund Burke stayed up all night reading the novel; and Richard Brinsley Sheridan pronounced it "*superior* to Fielding" and asked Fanny to write him a play. (She did draft a comedy called *The Witlings*, but her father, who feared that its satire would offend some influential people, persuaded her to suppress it. Although she never made her mark as a playwright, at least one later comedy—*A Busy Day*, which was not staged until 1993—confirms her talent.) From then on, an eager public sought her acquaintance and looked forward to her next book. When *Cecilia* came out, both Mary Wollstonecraft and Queen Charlotte were deeply impressed.

But life was less happy at home. Her stepmother had "grown more sour than ever," and eventually all of Fanny's brothers and sisters, including her best ally, Susan, married and moved away. Worst of all was a humiliating bogus courtship; George Owen Cambridge, a young clergyman with whom Fanny fell in love, dallied with her for years but never got around to proposing. Cinderella went back to her ashes. In 1786 she was offered a chance to wait on the queen at court as Second Keeper of the Robes—a glorified servant. Overjoyed by the honor, her father pressed her to accept; it would settle her future and perhaps advance his own interests. Fanny could not resist. For the next five years she suffered from her confinement at court: the lack of privacy and independence, the rudeness of superiors, the loneliness, the paralyzing etiquette, the excruciating boredom. It very nearly killed her. Finally, thanks to the pity aroused by her haggard looks, she managed to resign. It was 1791; she was thirty-nine.

Then at last Prince Charming came along. Alexandre Gabriel Jean-Baptiste Piochard d'Arblay was a handsome and gallant soldier who had commanded the guards at the Tuileries on the night that Louis XVI made his brief escape to Varennes. In the aftermath d'Arblay lost his fortune and almost his life. A Constitutionalist and follower of Lafayette, he fled the Terror and found his way to the colony of émigrés at Juniper Hall in Surrey. Susan lived nearby; she wrote admiring letters to her sister about the "*franc et loyal*" military man; and when Fanny visited she was as captivated by his talk as Desdemona by Othello's. Although Charles Burney opposed the match—d'Arblay was foreign, penniless, Catholic, and suspiciously liberal—the couple soon married, and they were very happy. In 1794, at forty-two, Fanny gave birth to a healthy son, "the Idol of the World."

They lived as happily ever after as most people do. But the long last part of Fanny's story chronicles a survivor. She survived the death of Susan in 1800, which ended an era of "perfect Happiness." She survived ten years of exile in France (1802–1812), where her husband, now General d'Arblay, had gone on an unsuccessful quest to reclaim his property and his career. She survived her mastectomy in 1811. After her father's death in 1814 she not only survived but took charge of his *Memoirs*, smoothing him to a plaster saint and herself to a little princess. She survived her husband and her son, who never lived up to his promise. And after her death in 1840, the publication of her *Diaries and Letters* brought Fanny's story back to life again.

Claire Harman deftly retraces that story and adds many shrewd psychological insights. This is no fairy tale. In place

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of the legendary ingenue it sets a complex and elusive human being. The center of interest is Fanny's personal history, not her literary career. For the most part this book disregards Frances Burney, "the Mother of English Fiction" (in Virginia Woolf's phrase). A reader who wants to know how her fiction works, or what it took from or taught to other writers, had better look elsewhere. Harman does not pretend to champion the novels or even to like them much. She keeps calling their dedications "fulsome" and might well understand what that much abused word means. Though appreciative of *Evelina* and *Cecilia*, she has little use for the later books and seems most pleased with the novelist when she can be typed as a sort of messy, underdeveloped Austen. The mind of the woman counts more than her place in the house of fiction.

Still, writing is in Harman's book the key to Fanny. By putting words on paper she got a life. Harman is at her best in following the paper trail of published and unpublished writings, and she is always aware of Fanny's efforts to shape and control her own image. Yet such familiarity breeds suspicion. For someone who prided herself on telling the truth, this artful keeper of journals certainly bent a great many facts. Perhaps her mean stepmother was not so mean. Or maybe Cinderella switched the slipper.

One gripping account, for instance, describes Fanny's peril when high tide trapped her and her dog on a small, steep island. Desperately and painfully she climbed to the top, using the handle of her parasol to haul the dog up by the collar; and there they clung to a rock for ten hours while the waves dashed them with spray. According to an eyewitness who rescued her, however, these circumstantial details were mostly invented. The dog was not there; the lady was not clinging to a rock but sitting on the sand; and she was in no real danger. Harman stalks the truth like Sherlock Holmes: the dog had just whelped and was highly unlikely to have been taken on a long walk. But the clinching argument is psychological. Writing six years after the incident, the widowed Madame d'Arblay re-fashioned it to express "her intense and wholly justifiable terror of being alone," and by then the dog was her only constant companion. So an inner symbolic truth or "retrospective prophecy" displaces mere facts.

Yet the example is unsettling. A writer who sees her feelings so vividly that they take shape as rocks and parasols has spun a web of words around her life. Biographers can easily be caught in such a web. Perhaps the most interesting part of this book is Harman's own struggle against getting stuck. "As one pores over the details of her life, finding inconsistencies in the record, what is a biographer to make of this strangely creative autobiographer? Is she an inveterate liar, or an inveterate writer?" The answer, of course, is that the two are hard to separate. The end of the book applauds Fanny's courage in admitting that "Truth and Fiction were sometimes 'indivisible' in her mind." But a biographer shows her courage by keeping truth and fiction apart. Harman's narrative has two strands: the story of how Fanny Burney created herself, and the story of what she made up or left out.

In the long run, what can a reader trust? Personal histories are not much more dependable than outright fictions. The sheer volume of papers amassed by a tireless scribbler covers her secrets: if Rosebud is there beneath the litter, the snoops will not find it. Harman concludes that no one can have the last word. The simple, artless heroine vanishes into the gloom of an intricate maze with no exit. So the story of Fanny Burney is after all as disturbing as Frances Burney's stories. If we trust the novels, the life of a sensitive woman must have been torture in Burney's time and place. Genteel Fanny makes a better show, if only to put on a better face for readers to come. And yet she also seems to have felt the rack. Are the private stories truer than the novels? Did Burney reveal her inner life in the journals, or in those long excruciating fictions? Nobody knows. Dear reader, nobody knows. ■

Blood and Soil

By ALAN TAYLOR

Subject Matter: Technology, the Body, and Science on the Anglo-American Frontier, 1500–1676 by Joyce Chaplin

(Harvard University Press, 411 pp., $45)

IT WAS ONCE popularly believed that the colonial conquest of North America was the result of superior technology: European colonizers won because they had the guns. In recent decades, however, we have grown more aware of the devastating impact of the European diseases that were unwittingly introduced to the Indians by their colonizers. Lacking the partial immunities of prior experience with those pathogens, the natives died by the thousands. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the native population probably collapsed to a tenth of its former numbers, weakening the Indians' capacity to resist invasion. In the current shorthand of colonial triumph, Europeans prevailed because they had long known smallpox and the Indians had not. In her learned, wide-ranging, and provocative book, Joyce E. Chaplin gives the great wave of epidemic death a further credit: it empowered white colonizers to create their sense of racial supremacy and entitlement to the continent.

Working the creative intersection of gender history, environmental history, and cultural history, Chaplin contributes to the great ongoing debate among colonial historians: how, why, and when did American racism originate? Most scholars focus on the emergence of slavery for Africans in the English-speaking colonies, especially Virginia. In the 1960s, Winthrop Jordan mustered evidence that the early modern (and highly xenophobic) English nurtured such negative stereotypes of foreigners, and especially of "black" Africans, that their early seventeenth-century colonists immediately invoked racial supremacy and rapidly adopted slavery. Other historians view the emergence of slavery in Virginia as more gradual and halting, becoming institutionalized only later in the seventeenth century. They also see slavery as preceding the development of strong racial categories. In this view, racism was a belated rationalization for a system of oppression that was originally animated only by greed and opportunism. Both views have an eye to the place of racism in our own society—the one fearful that racial thinking is tragically fundamental to American culture, the other

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hoping that racism is a mutable rationalization for institutions that can be genuinely reformed.

Chaplin switches our focus from Africans to Indians, and from slavery to disease. She pitches her inquiry in the dramatic key of the currently fashionable "history of the body." First developed by historians of science who study medieval and early modern Europe, the history of the body dissolves the distinction that preferred the mind to the body in the writing of intellectual and cultural history. In a constant loop, it is said, ideas about mind and body constitute and reconstitute one another; or, to be more precise, thoughts about body and mind cannot be disentangled from one another. If anything, thoughts about the body must take priority: Chaplin regards the body as nothing less than "the site for the construction of identity." In this view, people first and fundamentally define their corporeal being before proceeding to create the rest of their culture. Chaplin argues that in constructing race, "the English created difference by focusing on the body, then moved out from this site into the rest of culture." She defines race less by qualities of mind than as "an understanding of the human body that posited heritable and meaningful corporeal differences."

DURING THE LATE sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, there did not yet exist modern "science" as we understand it: the militantly rational, experimental, empirical, and instrumental pursuit of knowledge dissociated from the supernatural. The age's proto-scientists were "natural philosophers" such as John Dee, who combined without difficulty his positions as Queen Elizabeth's astrologer and mathematician, alchemist and metallurgist. Elizabethan natural philosophers conducted empirical experiments to confirm theories derived from Christian theology, occult texts, and ancient writers. In their view, the body was more than mere matter. "Nature was a concatenation of animating forces," Chaplin explains, "a web of analogies, sympathies, and antipathies. A *microcosm* (such as the human body) reflected the structure and meaning of the *macrocosm* or cosmos." Divinely designed combinations of earth, air, fire, and water made up the body, as they did the earth and the universe.

Advancing a variant of the racism-came-later interpretation, Chaplin maintains that in the late sixteenth and very early seventeenth centuries the English colonizers of America emphasized their common humanity with the Indians. Asserting such a commonality initially served colonial goals. It certainly helped to lull the pervasive anxiety that the North American environment might be fatal to English bodies. The prevailing beliefs insisted that bodies were so finely tuned to local climates that they needed a prolonged and often painful "seasoning" to adapt to new settings; and often bodies could not survive the regional diseases that represented the shock to their systems of a new continent or a new latitude. Therefore potential colonists (and investors in colonies) sought reassurance that the Indians were both healthy and fundamentally similar to the English in body and mind. To that end, John Brereton praised the New England Indian as "a perfect constitution of body, active, strong, healthful, and very wittie." Chaplin explains that the colonial promoters were primarily interested in Indians "as indicators of America's usefulness to them."

Indians who were not essentially different from the English could also be more quickly assimilated to English ways and rules. If akin in bodies, they would also accept new roles as guides for English explorers, and producers for the English market, and consumers of English goods, and worshippers of the English God, and subjects of the English monarch. Rather than define the Indians as alien and intractable "others," the colonizers cast them as earlier and more primitive (but highly teachable) versions of Europeans—the equivalents of the ancient Britons who, through Roman and Christian tutelage, ascended in civility to become the English. Chaplin notes that the colonizers initially "represented Indians nostalgically as versions of their ancient, savage, and valiant forbears."

In the middle decades of the seventeenth century, however, the colonizers' superficially benign view of the Indians broke down as a consequence of experience. It became abundantly clear that the Indians would not abjectly surrender their autonomy and their cultures to become English pupils, wards, and menial servants. At the same time, in thriving colonial farms and growing colonial families, the colonizers found a different source of reassurance: they discovered that their own bodies could adapt and re-make the land into a New England. In 1624 Richard Eburne concluded that "it be the people that makes the land English, not the land the people." Roger Williams of Rhode Island asserted in 1643 that "nature knowes no difference between *Europe* and *Americans* in blood, birth, [and] bodies."

Indeed, some colonists began to boast that they were improved by their new setting. During the 1640s, a New England colonist boasted that "God hath so prospered the climate to us, that our bodies are hailer and Children there born stronger, whereby our number is exceedingly increased." The colonists waxed more confident in their numbers, their prosperity, and their power at the same time that they lost faith in the Indians as proto-English in body and mind. As they took possession of the land, they began to dismiss the Indians as disposable obstacles, rather than celebrate them any longer as potential assets and kindred bodies.

FORMERLY IMPRESSED BY Indian technology—by their pharmacopoeia, canoes, fish weirs, bows, and maize—the colonists became dismissive of those native instruments by century's end. Instead of reasoning from an early disdain for Indian culture to a later dismissal of their bodies, the colonists belatedly rejected Indian bodies and only then lost interest in their tools and methods (except as curios of the exotic). Chaplin explains that "the body was the springboard from which the English then launched arguments about Indians' technical inferiority." The colonists imagined and cast backward a technology gap that, Chaplin insists, has for a long time distorted our understanding of the initial generation of contact. "The English had not begun to settle in the new world with the conviction that they had superior scientific and technological abilities, but they would later think this way *because* they colonized America and invaded a people whom they would, in the end, decide that they could not think of as similar to themselves."

Indeed, Chaplin discounts the notion that at the moment of their first encounter the English asserted, and the Indians accepted, the technological advantages of the Europeans. In 1588, the Roanoke explorer Thomas Harriot reported that

> most things they sawe with us, [such] as Mathematicall instruments, sea Compasses, the vertue of the load-stone in drawing iron, a perspective glasse whereby was shewed many strange sights, burning glasses, wilde firewoorkes, gunnes, hookes, writing and reading, springclockes that seeme to goe of themselves and many other things that wee had were so strange unto them, and so farre exceeded their capacities to comprehend the reason and meanes how they should be made and done, that they thought they were rather the workes of gods than of men, or at the leastwise [that] they had bene given and taught us of the gods.

Chaplin dismisses such reports as the "ventriloquism" of Europeans, planting their own praises to mask an insecurity about their true backwardness. She minimizes the technological gap between the

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newcomers and the natives, dwelling particularly on the presence of a few bows in the arsenals of some of the earliest English voyages and colonies. Chaplin concludes: "Everywhere the English went, they saw weapons similar to their own."

But if the English possessed similar bows, they also had different and far superior arrowheads: steel and iron, which cut more deeply than the flint and the copper possessed by the Indians. With good reason, the natives craved the acquisition of European metals for kettles, hoes, knives, arrowheads, and hatchets. They scavenged shipwrecks and avidly traded their furs for cherished bits of metal. Nor were guns as inconsequential and fleeting an advantage as Chaplin suggests. During the early seventeenth century, the governors of Virginia jealously guarded their guns and the men who could fire them, taking special pains to recover those that had been taken, with such singular determination, by the local paramount chieftain Powhatan. Indian behavior in the contact generation made plain their recognition that technology mattered, and that it differed radically. So did colonial behavior, as they adapted the far more productive horticulture and admired the more advanced herbal medicines of the natives.

At the crux of her argument, Chaplin asserts that in the mid-sixteenth century the colonizers contrasted their own natural increase (at least in New England) with the surging death rate among the natives, so as to justify their dispossession of the Indians. Rather than acknowledge their own role in bearing disease to the Indians, the colonists insisted that the diseases were native to North America. The widespread deaths revealed that the Indians had "a fateful propensity within their bodies" that kept them from ever becoming seasoned to North America. Strays from Asia, they had never put down proper roots, in contrast to the English bodies that so smoothly adapted to North America. Asserting "a cosmic synchrony between the invaders and their new place of abode," the colonists believed "that they were better suited to America than Indians and could supplant them as natives of the new world." Chaplin concludes, "[The] colonists seemed to believe themselves more natural than the aborigines, as if English bodies had always been meant to be planted in Virginia and Plymouth."

What then are we to make of the persisting colonial recognition that Indians were taller, straighter, faster, stronger, and tougher? Colonial accounts conceded that the Indians could traverse the woods, see long distances, endure tortures, conduct battles, and bear children more stoically and skillfully than any colonist. With considerable ingenuity, Chaplin detects a colonial subtext that undercut the praise of those native qualities. By disciplining their children's bodies with cradle boards, cold baths, initiation rites, and greasy ointments, Indian parents deadened the feeling of pain. Far from being more natural, Indians were (in colonial eyes) more artificial. As Chaplin puts it, "Indians were unnatural beings, bodies for which artifice had created a kind of unfeeling inhumanity." Superficially tough, Indian bodies remained internally weak, unable to survive the critical tests posed by alcohol and infectious disease.

In sum: by imagining biology, rather than culture, as the central and polarizing difference between peoples, and by insisting on their own innate superiority, the colonists used the Indians to construct the new concept of race. In Chaplin's words, the colonists "defined a new idiom, one which argued that the significant human variation in North America was not due to external environment but instead lay deeper within the bodies of its European and Indian peoples." Confident in their bodily superiority, colonists became white racial supremacists who proceeded to seize the continent as properly their own. They cast themselves as destiny's true Americans, properly supplanting the unfit and unworthy Indians. That "they were the *natural* residents of America" is "the powerful racist fiction that remains the basis of creole identity in North America."

CHAPLIN OFFERS AN innovative and powerful interpretation of the first century of Anglo-American colonization. Her argument is brilliant and original. I wish only that it was more consistently and explicitly supported by the evidence. Perhaps some seventeenth-century colonist did directly state that the selective epidemics proved the innate inferiority of Indian, and the superiority of English, bodies. If so, his words do not appear in Chaplin's book. Instead, her argument pivots on her own assertions. This is a work of intellectual and cultural history that offers starkly limited access to words from the past.

Most of the brief snippets quoted are framed by Chaplin's words, which give the sentences their import; and the historical quotations do not match the bold sweep of the argument. She almost never invites the reader to join her in examining a sustained piece of writing that reveals the connections drawn by the original writer. In three hundred pages of text, only three quotations are sufficiently long (more than about three lines) to justify blocking and indentation. Apparently Chaplin does not need any colonial writer to broadly and explicitly establish her claim; instead she recovers a covert unity found in many bits and pieces throughout the culture. But her tight control of the past's voices is jarring in a book that faults other scholars for taking quotations out of context.

In general, the colonists emphasized divine providence as the explanation for the new epidemics that killed more natives than newcomers. No respecter of bodies, their God chose who should live and die throughout the world, including who should prevail in North America, on the basis of his plan for humanity. The seventeenth-century epidemics proved to the colonists' satisfaction that God favored them so long as they honored his dictates and so long as the Indians clung to their own errant faiths. Rather than seeing the diseases as endemic to North America, the colonial observers consistently noted that they were epidemics that dramatically ruptured Indian demography, greatly and dramatically reducing populations that had once been numerous. And the colonists recognized that the epidemics began immediately before, or coincided with, the advent of their colonization, which again suggested to them a supernatural rather than a proto-biological explanation for the Indians' demise.

The consistency of Chaplin's argument overrides considerable variations in colonial experience. Her interpretation works best for New England, where the seventeenth-century colonists did enjoy healthy conditions and a prolific natural increase. But the great majority of English emigrants went to Virginia and the West Indies, where harsh work regimens, a hot climate, and chronic diseases (especially malaria and dysentery) killed the colonists faster than they could reproduce. Between 1607 and 1622, about 10,000 English people emigrated to Virginia, but only 20 percent of that population was still alive there in 1622. An English critic belatedly remarked that "instead of a plantation, Virginia will shortly get the name of a slaughterhouse." During the seventeenth century, 190,000 British people emigrated to the West Indies (compared with the 21,000 who went to New England), but only 33,000 resided there at century's end. Outside New England, the growth of the colonial population was sustained only by immigration. In 1638, Parliament proposed legislation to limit emigration to Virginia, alarming the planters, who complained that their colony would "in [a] short time melt to nothing for want of supplyes of people."

What cause, then, did a Virginian or West Indian colonist have to celebrate his or her bodily triumph over the new environment? Indeed, the southern colonists generally concluded that their bodies were inferior to those of Africans in coping with hard work and hot climes. In a perverse

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manner, this sense of bodily inferiority informed the southern colonists' insistence on their own mental superiority, and their conviction that they should own the labor of forcibly imported Africans.

In invoking the esoteric writings of natural philosophers as fundamental to colonial thinking, Chaplin suggests little difference between the ideas of elites and the notions of common people. Two decades ago, the triumphant "new social historians" asserted a stark divide in the early modern era between the formal discourse of the learned few and the *mentalité* of the unlettered many. The newer history of the body tends to blur that line, accepting a more holistic view of culture, blending low and high, and enabling a few texts to speak for entire populations. In this way, reading John Dee becomes a key to understanding how everyone in England thought about their bodies. In this view, we need take no special pains to demonstrate that laborers shared the bodily concepts of natural philosophers.

Chaplin's argument also homogenizes the considerable variation in colonial thinking about native bodies that persisted long after the momentous transition that she finds in the mid-seventeenth century. In rhetoric and in law (if not in bedchambers), the racial distinction between Indian bodies and white bodies remained far less certain than that between blacks and whites. During the eighteenth century, leading Americans, including the southern planters William Byrd II and Thomas Jefferson, often urged a general miscegenation with Indians that they found appalling (in theory if not in personal practice) with blacks. Where separation and subordination seemed the solution to controlling blacks, the eighteenth-century racial theorists favored intermarriage and cultural assimilation as the most benign mode of dissolving Indian difference and resistance. And some colonists continued to celebrate the beauty and the strength of Indian bodies and the naturalness of their cultures, if only as tropes to criticize the artificiality of colonial bodies and society.

Among scholars, bold new approaches such as the "the history of the body" inspire an assertive zeal that scants the credit due to predecessors. Newly possessed of a master key to the past, the adepts keenly detect flaws in older approaches as they advance bold revisions of sources and explanations. Much of what we thought we knew, it seems, turns out to have been wrong. Such sweeping and partisan claims have accompanied every boomlet in historical scholarship: the new social history, then the new cultural history, and now the history of the body.

Chaplin's primary culprits are the "ethno-historians": those scholars who combine anthropology and history to study native peoples on the eve of colonization and during its initial stages. Ethnohistorians, she asserts, fail to detect the "ventriloquism" practiced by their colonial sources, which planted self-serving ideas in alleged Indian remarks. "We will never begin to comprehend what Indians may have been trying to say in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries," Chaplin notes, "until we turn down the background noise, the static of cultural expectations and assumptions that the English put into their accounts about their early colonization." Colonial accounts "were dependent on contemporary debates over natural philosophy and too eager to ventriloquize native opinions within the forms of that debate." Alas, the credulous ethnohistorians "have done little to examine English patterns of thought about nature (especially about the body) which would allow better decoding of these texts."

Consider, for example, the intriguing and influential account written by Thomas Harriot, the natural philosopher who visited the Indian villages near Roanoke on the North Carolina coast in 1585. To interrogate his informants, Harriot learned some of their language, although too little to satisfy Chaplin. Noting the Indian dread of the new epidemics, Harriot reported that they credited the colonists with the power to shoot "invisible bullets" that "killed the people in any towne that had offended us, as wee listed, how farr distant from us soever they were." Chaplin distrusts Harriot's metaphor as covertly conveying his own views on atomism, then a controversial new doctrine smacking of atheism: "It is possible that he ventriloquized dangerous hypotheses about matter through informants who would appear exotic to his readers, and therefore appropriate bearers of heterodoxy."

But perhaps we should not dismiss Harriot's observation as no more than the covert expression of his own scientific beliefs. After all, other colonists with no investment in radical science reported much the same thing: Indian fears that the English could employ disease over long distances as a weapon. In 1621, according to Edward Winslow, the New England Indians suspected that the colonists kept "the plague buried in our storehouse, which, at our pleasure, we could send forth to whate place or people we would, and destroy them therewith, though we stirred not from home." A devout Puritan, Winslow held no brief for atomism. To paraphrase Freud, sometimes an invisible bullet is an invisible bullet.

To score points against the ethnohistorians, Chaplin paints her book into a corner, adopting an extreme skepticism about the value of colonial sources for revealing anything about the Indians: "We can never know the actual content of whatever Roanok[e] statement Harriot was quoting." In principle, Chaplin rejects Stephen Greenblatt's agnosticism about recovering Indian culture through the texts made by colonizers, but in practice she almost always finds illusions rather than insights in her Indian sources. This Euro-skepticism limits the range of Chaplin's vision. A detailed examination of what the colonizers thought about themselves and the neighboring natives, Chaplin's book does not devote comparable space and energy to an examination of how the Indians conceived of their bodies and of those of the newcomers. Consistently treated as the objects of the colonial gaze, her Indians do not receive equal time as historical actors in the making of their own corporeal and racial ideas.

How did Indian beliefs about the body shift as they experienced massive epidemics that spared most of their invaders? Chaplin declines to answer, out of her conviction that European ventriloquism has rendered Indians virtually unknowable. Of New England's missionized Indians, she asserts that it is "difficult to determine what Eliot's converts (or any other Indians) truly did believe." In Rhode Island, for example, archaeologists recently excavated the intriguing grave of a seventeenth-century Indian child, bearing a traditional "medicine bundle" of sacred objects rendered syncretic by the folded page from an English Bible. After advancing multiple interpretations for the mix of objects, Chaplin ultimately rejects all potential meaning: we are left only with "our inability to know what these things meant."

In this certainty of doubt, Chaplin has plenty of company. Scholars have recently become so sophisticated at detecting hidden biases and esoteric messages that we risk writing only about the construction of illusions. By discounting all colonial documents as fatally flawed by "Eurocentrism," we retreat to a history that writes only about the subjectivity of Europeans. By seeing little but "ventriloquism" in European accounts, we deny our own capacity to read against their grain to recover the thoughts of native peoples. We also deny the capacity of native peoples to rattle the complacency and the categories of the colonizers (and of the historians of the colonizers). If the Indians did not make our sources, they often catalyzed the creation of those sources, and by the shock of their difference they forced compromises on colonial writers initially bent on confirming their preconceptions. Their evidence, too, in all the richness of its contradictions, has much to teach modern scholars. ■

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IS IT A LITTLE LAUGHTER THAT we need now? Then behold the contrition of yesterday's frivolous, the new fashion in gravity. The man who edits *Vanity Fair* has ruled that the age of cynicism is over. He would know. I always wondered what it would take to put a cramp in the trashy mind, and at last I have my answer: a mass grave in lower Manhattan. So now depth has buzz. The papers are filled with hip people seeing through hipness, composing elegiac farewells to the days of Gary Condit and Jennifer Lopez. The *on dit* has moved beyond the apple martini. It has discovered evil and the problem of its meaning. No doubt about it, seriousness is in. So it is worth remembering that there are large swathes of American society in which seriousness was never out. Not everybody has lived as if the media is all there is. Not everybody has been consecrated only to cash and cultural signifiers. Not everybody has been a pawn of irony. Everybody was shocked by the attack, but not everybody was philosophically unprepared for it. For a thoughtful life is not premised on an experience of catastrophe, except for the exceedingly thoughtless. There are states of happiness that are not states of stupidity. We should not have to choose between being imbeciles and being mourners.

BUT MOURNERS CAN BE IMBECILES, too. "[M]any of those people who died this past week," Billy Graham instructed the prayer service at the National Cathedral on September 14, "are in heaven right now, and they wouldn't want to come back. It's so glorious and so wonderful." This was Mohamed Atta's eschatology, too. It is not consoling, it is insulting. We are not a country of children. Nothing that transpired on September 11 was wonderful, nothing. The only effect of these fantasies is to loosen the American grip on reality at precisely the moment that it needs to be tightened. If it makes sense to call on religion in times of trouble, it is not because religion abolishes spiritual pain, but because religion acknowledges spiritual pain. When all the political and military and economic and psychological and cultural analyses of the slaughter are exhausted, there remains the question of the justice of the world. Whether or not it has a religious answer, this is a religious question. About this question it is not easy to be brilliant. Silence is often a surer sign of mental progress than is articulateness. For some people, a house of worship is useful for such a reflection because it is God's house; but there are those who repair to a house of worship because it is Job's house, and therefore the natural setting for their objection to the order of things. Belief and unbelief are a disagreement, but they do not disagree about what is significant, and the vocabulary in which they conduct their disagreement is for certain purposes the only adequate vocabulary. And so Billy Graham's degradation of that vocabulary should have sent all intelligent souls in perplexity running from the church. Of course the air outside the church is not exactly thick with lucidity: at Yankee Stadium last Sunday, at the conclusion of the greatest afternoon in the history of American pluralism, Oprah Winfrey imparted the superstition that "when you lose a loved one, you gain an angel whose name you know." No, you do not.

ALSO, IN THE SEARCH FOR STRENGTH, beware fine writing. It, too, is cheap balm. In *The New Yorker* last week, writer after writer elected to meet atrocity with sensibility. "On the morning of the day they did it," Adam Gopnik began, "the city was as beautiful as it had ever been. Central Park had never seemed so gleaming and luxuriant..." and so on: the old bathos to protect against the new knowledge. Gopnik has a skill for shrinking everything in the universe to the scale of a bourgeois amenity, but he surpassed himself with the observation that the odor of the destruction was "almost like the smell of smoked mozzarella." On September 11, knowingness! I was not in Manhattan when it was attacked, but I am certain that Gopnik's observation is a lie. It is also the remark of a hick, the expression of a desperate provincialism. In the provinces, at least, they struggle against their confinements.

BUT IT WAS JOHN UPDIKE WHO MADE me feel brutish. "Suddenly summoned to witness something great and horrendous, we keep fighting not to reduce it to our own smallness": his contribution opened with this scruple and then proceeded to discard it, providing a cautionary illustration of the limitations of literariness. The writer witnessed the fall of the towers from an apartment in Brooklyn, but he produced a description of what he saw that would not differ from a description of a painting of what he saw. "Smoke speckled with bits of paper curled into the cloudless sky, and strange inky rivulets ran down the giant structure's vertically corrugated surface": such writing defeats its representational purpose, because it steals attention away from reality and toward language. It is provoked by nothing so much as its own delicacy. Its precision is a trick: it appears to bring the reader near, but it keeps the reader far. It is in fact a kind of armor: an armor of adjectives and adverbs. The loveliness is invincible. Again: "[I]t fell straight down like an elevator, with a tinkling shiver and a groan of concussion distinct across the mile of air." But elevators do not fall the way the World Trade Center fell. Mass murders do not, in any important way, tinkle. Sentences tinkle, though; and the tinkling of Updike's sentence is a small salvation from the horror. And again: "Amid the glittering impassivity of the many buildings across the East River, an empty spot had appeared, as if by electronic command, beneath the sky that, but for the sulfurous cloud streaming south toward the ocean, was pure blue, rendered uncannily pristine by the absence of jet trails." Here the epicene evasion is the work of the syntax, which imposes a soft, pleasing pattern upon the charnel-pit that is supposed to be its subject. And finally:

> The next morning, I went back to the open vantage from which we had watched the tower so dreadfully slip from sight. The fresh sun shone on the eastern façades, a few boats tentatively moved in the river, the ruins were still sending out smoke, but New York looked glorious.

Bin Laden failed. The aesthetic appreciation of the city is intact. The look is glorious. The spectacle survives. "Glorious," of course, is one of the laziest terms in the language, an instrument of hyperbole that is commonly used to raise the ordinary into the extraordinary and thereby to infuse the speaker with an exaggerated feeling of good fortune. (The profiteroles were glorious.) I do not doubt the evidence of the writer's eyes: the weather was indeed sadistically beautiful. But why is he writing about the weather? It was a deathscape that lay before him. There are circumstances in which beauty is an obstacle to truth. All this is the testimony of a man who has words for everything and nothing but words. A walk on Montague Street, Updike recalls, "renewed the impression that, for all its failings, this is a country worth fighting for." Amen, amen, amen; but a principle is not an impression.

LEON WIESELTIER

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TO GO DEEP INTO THE NORTH SLOPE WHERE THE OIL IS, YOU NEED A LOT OF HEAVY EQUIPMENT AND, OF COURSE, A ROAD TO RUN IT ON. SO WE USE THE WATER AND ICE ALREADY THERE TO BUILD ONE. BUT LONG BEFORE THAT, WE USE INFRARED TECHNOLOGY NORMALLY USED TO MONITOR PIPELINES TO LOOK FOR POLAR BEAR DENS. AND WHEN WE DO FIND THEM, WE GO ELSEWHERE, LEAVING MOTHERS AND CUBS SNUG IN THEIR BEDS. IN FOUR MONTHS, THE CUBS VENTURE OUT. THE ICE ROAD MELTS. IT'S SPRING IN ALASKA AGAIN. AND IT'S LIKE WE'VE NEVER BEEN THERE AT ALL. | phillips66.com

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